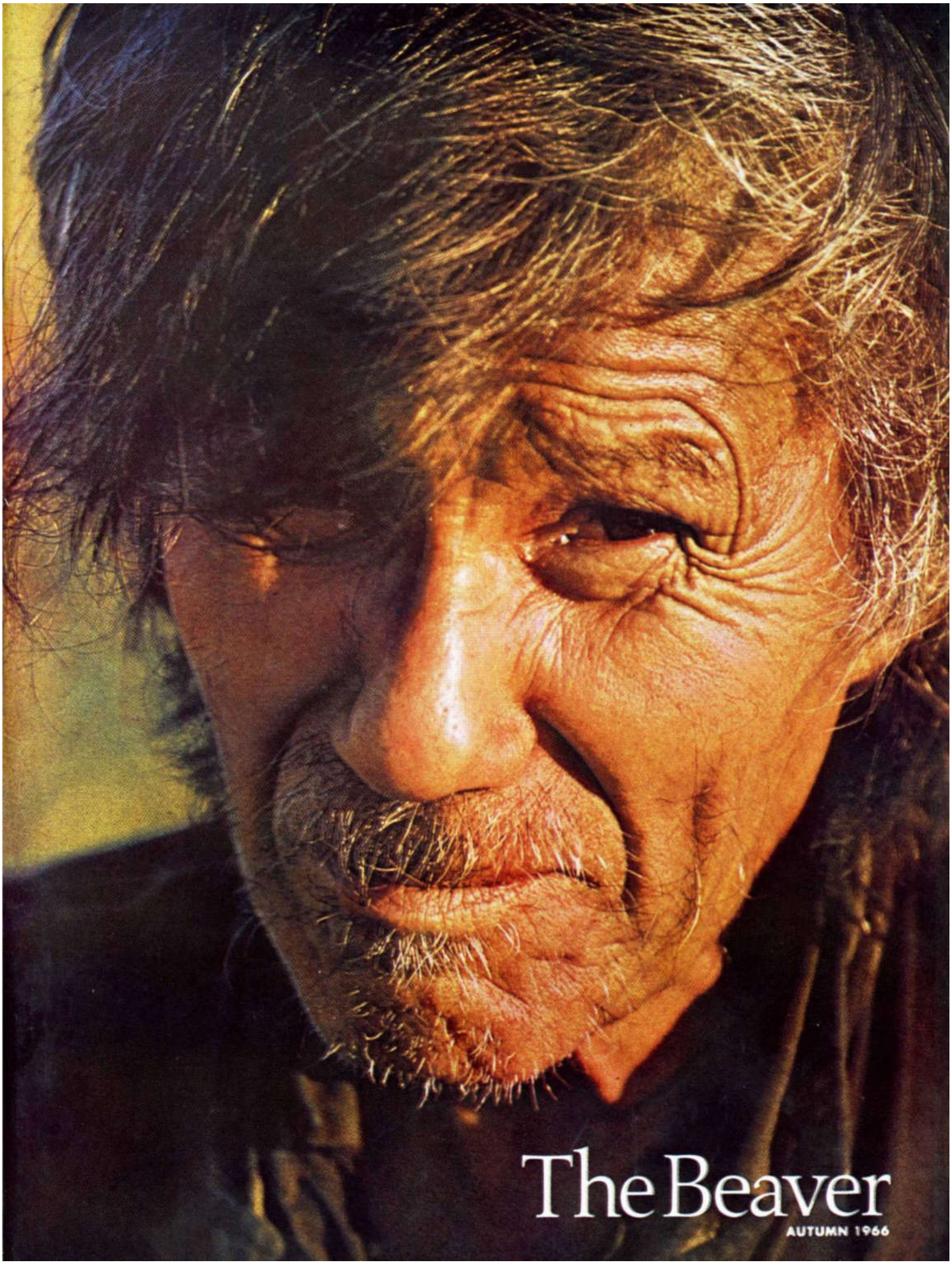

The Beaver

AUTUMN 1966

Photo by Charles Gimpel

These Eskimo children, growing up today in the new North, will know a better life than their ancestors did as they faced the challenge of existence on the high rim of our continent. The Hudson's Bay Company is proud of its long association with the people of the Arctic. As new opportunities open to the Eskimo, we share, with all Canadians, a sense of gratification and hope for their future.

Hudson's Bay Company

INCORPORATED 2ND MAY 1670

The Beaver

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Photo by Egon Bork

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HUDSON'S BAY HOUSE

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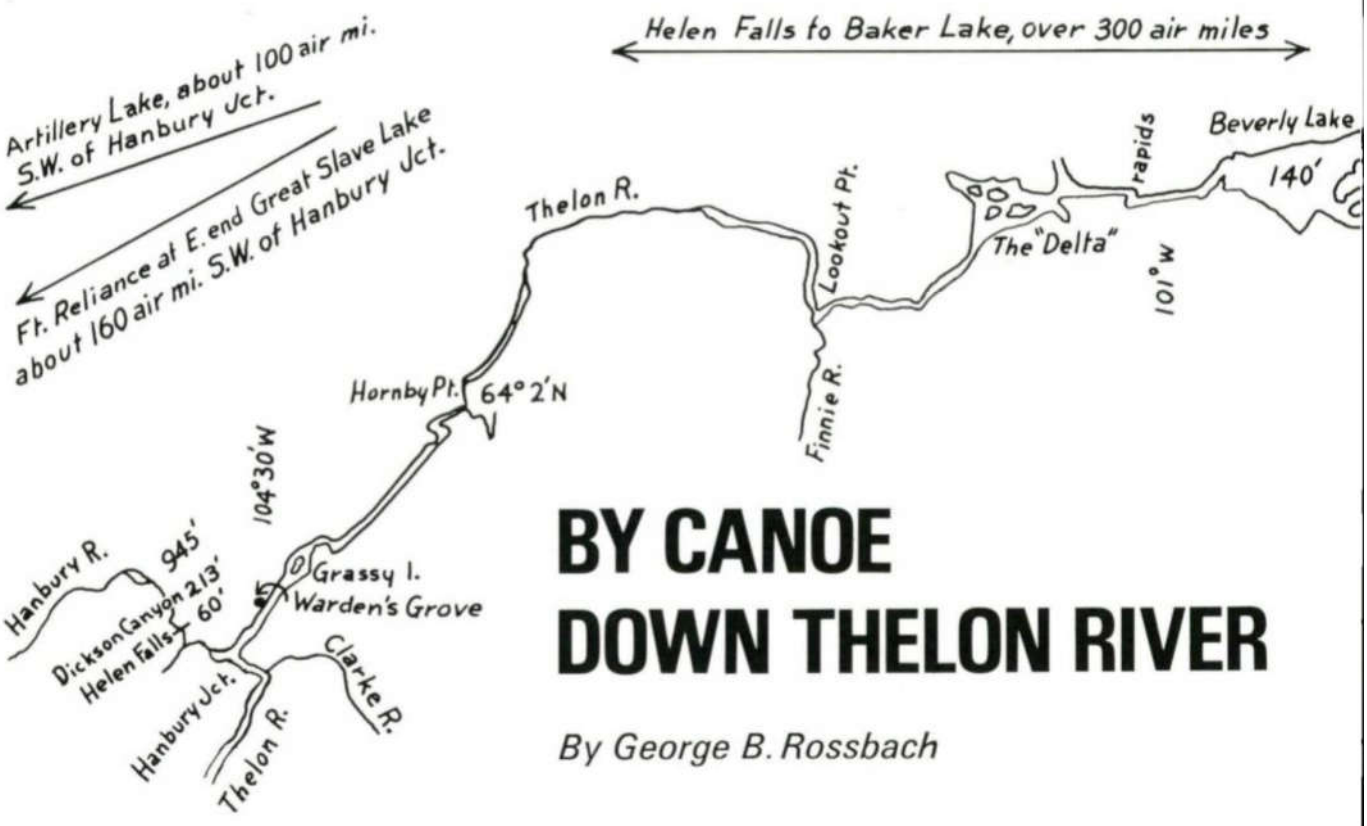


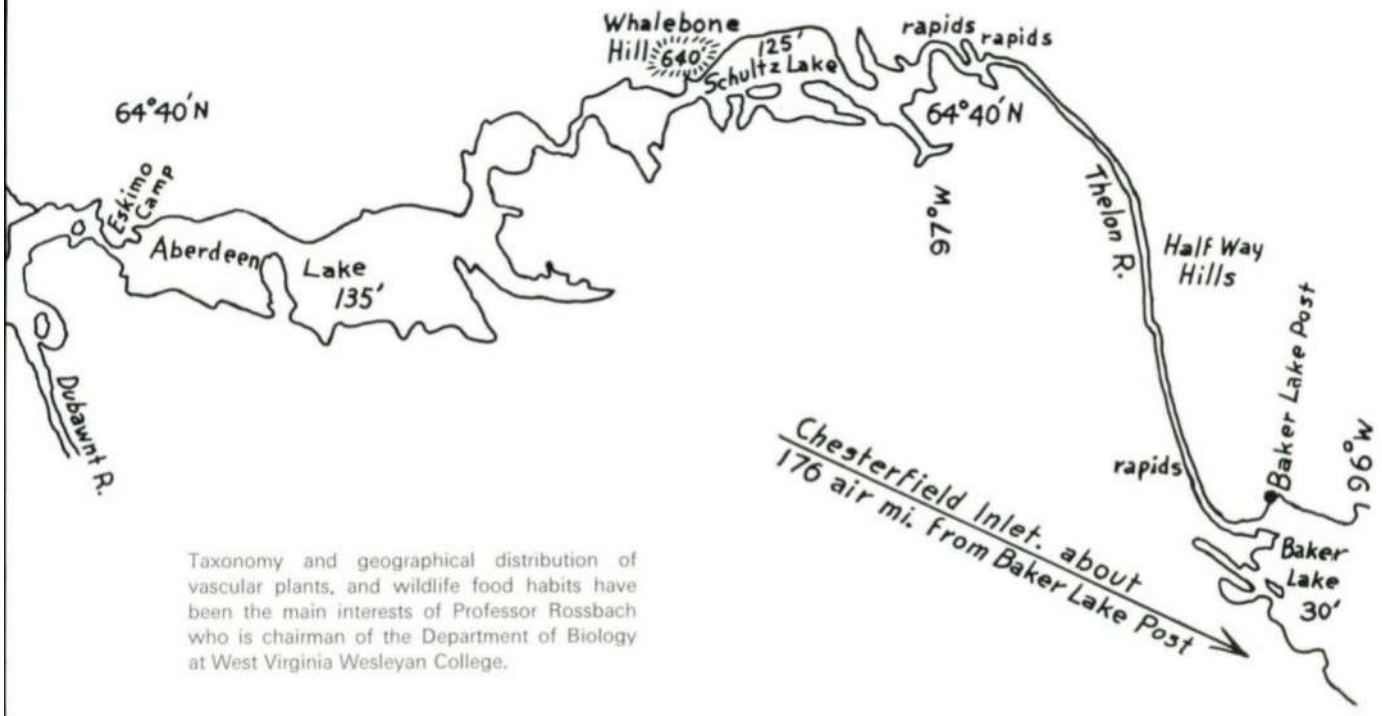
BY CANOE DOWN THELON RIVER

By George B. Rossbach

NORTHERN CANADA offers many choices of alluring adventures by canoe. I had hoped long, and finally planned. I chose the Thelon in the Northwest Territories for a trip in the summer of 1965. Though the Thelon flows generally eastward, it presents an ecological effect of going north. An eastward outlying strip of spruce woods lines its upper banks above Beverly Lake, and below here there is only tundra. This change eastward favoured my interest in taxonomic and geographical botany. On the other hand, the barrens and spruce forest are rather simple to behold and to get used to, yet in their simplicity they have a unique beauty. Of all rivers, the Thelon has as good a representation of larger animals as any and better than most: migrating herds of caribou, muskoxen in the Thelon sanctuary, wolves, and up-river, the barrenground grizzly. Some Eskimos still hunt caribou along its big lakes. The fishing is largely excellent. There are some good rapids, yet too few to be a major threat to life or progress even if one's canoe is loaded, as it will be if a botanist or a photographer travels far, carrying food and shelter.

We travelled probably over 400 miles in two 17-foot Grumman aluminum canoes rented at Yellowknife by arrangement with the Hudson's Bay Company in Winnipeg. We paddled most of the way, but used one three-h.p. motor, towing the second canoe, on parts of the big lakes. This worked out well, but a shoulder-wrenching labour befell the steersman in the stern of the second canoe. My company was Henry Briggs, naturalist, photographer, canoeist, and good cook from Maine; Wayne Dunbar, Maine guide and canoeist; William Meier, from New Hampshire, and also Lady, Henry's fourteen-year-old collie dog. I baled big bundles of botanical hay in an area little collected to date; Henry made movies of wildlife, plants, scenery, Indians, Eskimos, and so on.

We drove from Maine to Winnipeg, Manitoba, where we took a train to Edmonton, Alberta, then flew north to Yellowknife on the north shore of Great Slave Lake. We enjoyed six days in this small, but growing town of varied people, which has become, since the 1940s, much more than a Hudson's Bay Post of about a dozen white men and a band of Indians. Gold mines did this.



Taxonomy and geographical distribution of vascular plants, and wildlife food habits have been the main interests of Professor Rossbach who is chairman of the Department of Biology at West Virginia Wesleyan College.

I looked out the Old Stope Hotel window from atop a great cliff to view the lake and rocky, spruce-tipped horizon, never darkened, for sunset and sunrise were inseparable. Chained huskies wailed and groaned at times. Many of our neighbours were Dogrib Indians. In company with the visiting nurse and a couple studying the native language, I visited an isolated Dogrib village where people lived in cabins and smoked netted whitefish and lake trout in tipis. We went by canoe. The nurse "shot" Indian babies in Chief Sangris's cabin. After six days of preparation, packing, collecting plants, photographing, and eating, we took off on June 26th, in a chartered Otter plane, with the canoes strapped on the pontoons. We flew east along the eastern arm of the 300-mile lake, then northeast over the last major spruce and jackpine forest, rocky and sandy barrens, myriad lakes, the bigger ones with ice just beginning to break in zigzag cracks, then over tundra with sand eskers, flats with frost polygons and upheavals, and caribou trails, over huge cliffs, canyons, and falls of the Lockhart and Hanbury Rivers, to the junction of the Hanbury and the bigger, east-flowing Thelon, where a fringe of extended spruce braves the arctic barrens. Here, on the rock and sand of an ice-bulldozed shore we had tea with our pilot, waved him goodbye, and began our five weeks of camping and canoeing on a wild and beautiful river, as voluminous as, and often much broader than the Mississippi, with five expansive lakes en route.

Our site for a preliminary base camp was moved to a sand-bar-willow-scrub island populated with shy, juvenile, moulting Canada geese, inquisitive terns and herring gulls, and several nesting ducks and plovers. We thus thought to avoid encroachment by barrenground grizzlies, whose fresh tracks lined the mainland shore. After we made camp I found grizzly tracks here, too!

We ascended the turbulent Hanbury on a scenic overnight detour for about ten miles to 60-foot Helen Falls. We lined canoes along the bank, or motored where water was not too swift. Local flocks of cliff swallows wheeled about their clay-pot nests. I found here the cairn and notes of the two recent parties who had canoed these rivers, led by Eric Morse in 1962, and by Irving Fox in 1964. We sat behind a flimsy screen of white spruce and twice watched huge grizzlies poke along the shore, swim the swift, cold river, and sit on the opposite bank. Both eventually sniffed us, and ran off over the barrens at an amazing speed—in the *other* direction. We heard the whistled songs of Harris's sparrow, which nests only at treeline, and songs of tree sparrows, white-crowned sparrows, grey-cheeked thrushes, at least one kind of warbler, and even robins. Eastward, on open barrens, longspurs, snow buntings, and horned larks were some of the commonest small birds.

We located about thirty-five muskoxen on the southeasterly side of the Thelon River just below its junction with the Hanbury River, and above our base camp. Henry and Wayne went inland in a semi-circle, to approach the herd with a moving-picture camera and tripod. Bill and I approached from a point nearer the river. Both pairs of us managed to get very close to the animals. Bill and I kept behind a screen of clumped black spruce and approached up-wind. They never smelt or saw us. They were of various sizes, but there were no young calves among them. They browsed the willow bushes and

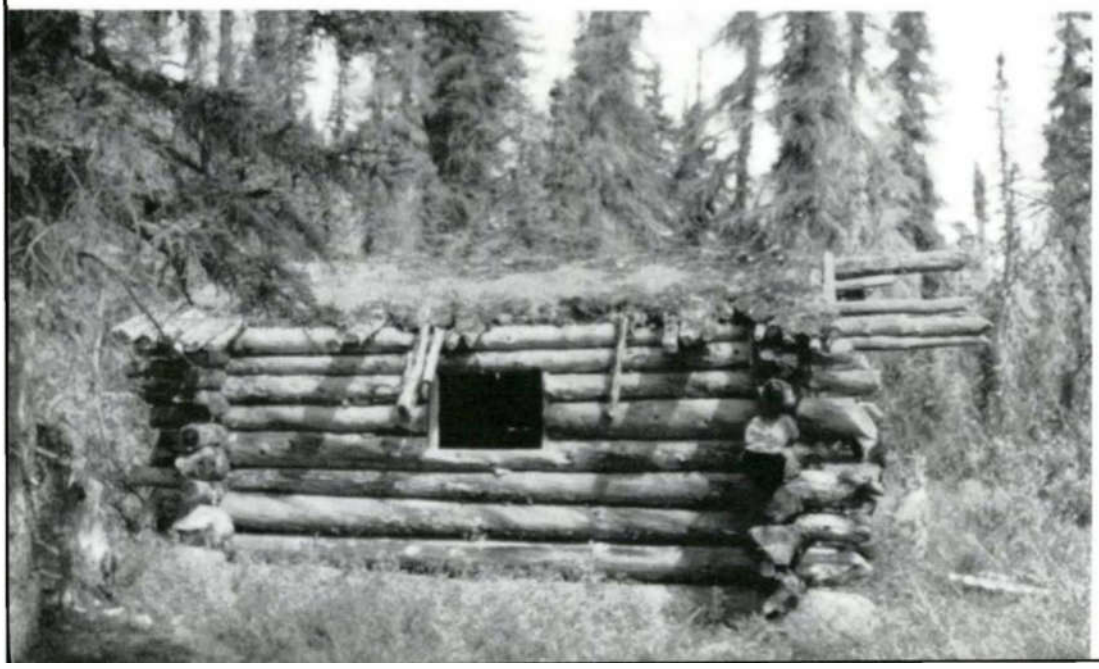
sometimes a lean black spruce swayed as an individual rubbed its side against it. We noticed the high, massive shoulders, strikingly shaggy wool, which also draped the spruces, the short, fuzzy ears, and the down-curved, flare-ended horns. Often we heard a deep rumbling sound resembling distant thunder. They mutter to themselves. At times, bands of muskoxen cantered off over a barren hill, alarmed, it seemed, by the photographers. They never formed the well-known protective circle. While Bill and I stood with our backs to the high river-bluff two cows plodded along a trail, straight towards us, while I snapped some head-on photographs until, dubious of muskox psychology, I waved a hand when they seemed uncomfortably close, yet probably as much as fifty feet away. The leading cow riveted her brown eyes upon me for a while, then slowly turned round and plodded into the muskeg to browse. Far to the northeast, below Grassy Island, we saw one more muskox, a big bull browsing on willows by the shore. The wind was in our favour and we paddled very close before it galumphed wildly off along the shore.

Bill also sighted a third grizzly, perhaps the one which had left fresh tracks in the sand on our island where we first camped. It, like the others, was wary, and ran over the brow of the barren rise above the river. Even as far east as a point eight miles northwest of Aberdeen Lake an Eskimo said a grizzly appeared on the tundra behind our tent before we arose one morning. On the south shore of Beverly Lake, the uppermost of the big lakes, we again saw signs of a grizzly. Here there is a prefab cabin built by wildlife research men. Its interior was in complete disarray. Parallel gouges of four and five claw-marks scored all walls and ceiling above a shelf. There was a bashed hole in the plywood wall, specimen vials were strewn over the floor, the half-open door was jammed. A bear had evidently gone berserk. We missed him gladly.

At our first campsite we saw our first wolf, which trotted easily, but swiftly, in zigzags over shore and tundra. It seemed to know we were watching across the river, but it continued to sniff and weave about. The shoulders and neck were heavy with white winter fur, the flanks and hind quarters less shaggy and slightly darker. Altogether, we saw four wolves, one here, one at Hornby Point, another northeast of Lookout Point, and the fourth just southwest of Beverly Lake. Tracks were frequent in beach sand. Once our cache of trout, buried in a snowbank, disappeared. We never knew where it went, but wolves had visited here earlier. Wolves were neither bold nor very timid. While I was grubbing specimens of plants (with my eyes on the ground) Wayne, standing on a ledge above me, said "Wolf". I looked up to see a white wolf snaking about among the gnarled dwarf spruces. It had not seen us, but did soon after Wayne spoke. It gazed at us briefly, then glided off on the tundra, often stopping to look back.

White and black spruce form scattering lines or clumps along the Thelon almost as far as Beverly Lake. A few stands are of notably big white spruce, usually occurring at notched drain-offs in the bank. Stumps at Warden's Grove have a hundred and more rings. Here stand three log cabins, two old and crumbling, one very new. Leaning against an old one was a toboggan. On it was printed: W. H. B. Hoare, a reminder of earlier men associated with the Thelon Game Sanctuary through which we were passing. The new cabin has an ingenious lock easily opened by people but not by wolverines and bears. It is a chained iron rod in a socket. The rod can be pulled out, or reinserted with a hammer, which hangs above the door. Nearby is a cache. Plastic-wrapped goods reside on a platform atop four poles ringed by the cylinders of gas

The abandoned Hoare and Knox cabin at Warden's Grove. G. H. ROSSBACH



DON THOMAS

H. BRIGGS

At Helen Falls film was changed near the cairn of Morse and Fox. Above, a barrenground grizzly patrols the shore of the Hanbury, across the river from us.

G. D. ROSSBACH

drums to inhibit pilfering by wolverines. Here in the heavy grove familiar robins were singing with the thrushes and sparrows, but unlike robins southward, these were shy in the presence of people.

One of the most delightful groves is one near which we camped northeast of Hornby Point. The big spruce grow along a cascade brook in a ravine. The nearby open barrens, as usual in early July, were gaudy with the bright purplish pink flowers of the dwarf Rhododendron called Lapland rosebay and the low, white clusters of the small-leaved arctic Labrador tea, but in and bordering the local woods I found twinflower, a columbine, and the only patch of red raspberry and white-flowered currant that I saw on the trip east of Great Slave Lake. Fragile bladder ferns were unfurling on a shaded sandstone cliff. It was here we found the winter droppings of a moose, and just up-river the conspicuous gnawings of porcupines. Moose have been reported by Eskimos east to Beverly Lake, but it is said no white man has seen one on the Thelon. Porcupines are isolated here.

Grassy Island from the air.

At a high place on the bank called Lookout Point we had a welcome few days' stop-over in bad weather at the new wildlife research cabin occupied by Ernest Kuyt of Fort Smith. Ernie studies habits of wolves, and tags their pups in dens! I asked: "And what if mother's home?" "Whenever she is, she runs out and worries at a distance," said Ernie. He took us by motored canoe across the Thelon and up the Finnie, which is lined by the best and most extensive example of a southerly type of true forest in this region. The arctic flora was invaded here by a southern and western Canadian forest flora. For example, here occur the one-flowered Pyrola (*Moneses*), and buckbean (*Menyanthes*) local to one boggy pool, and the southerly species of Labrador tea (*Ledum groenlandicum*). Then in a boggy area, with both black and white spruces, bearded with local, long, black lichen, we saw a strikingly isolated colony of tamarack. Ernie Kuyt told me that even trembling aspen grew farther up the Finnie. I had already seen one lone young poplar on the bank of the Thelon. Balsam poplar has been collected near here by Dr John Tener, while studying muskoxen. Ernie showed us the old cuttings of spruce by Eskimos when they still came here to cut wood for sleds maybe in the 1930s. At the cabin where Ernie was staying I dried my plants at a stove. We ate a delicious whitefish chowder concocted by Henry Briggs. Since whitefish rarely bite a lure, we netted them. We had by now caught and eaten lake trout, grayling, whitefish, and pike. Char were the only new fish, yet to be netted at Baker Lake. Trout were fine, char best, and pike poorest to eat.

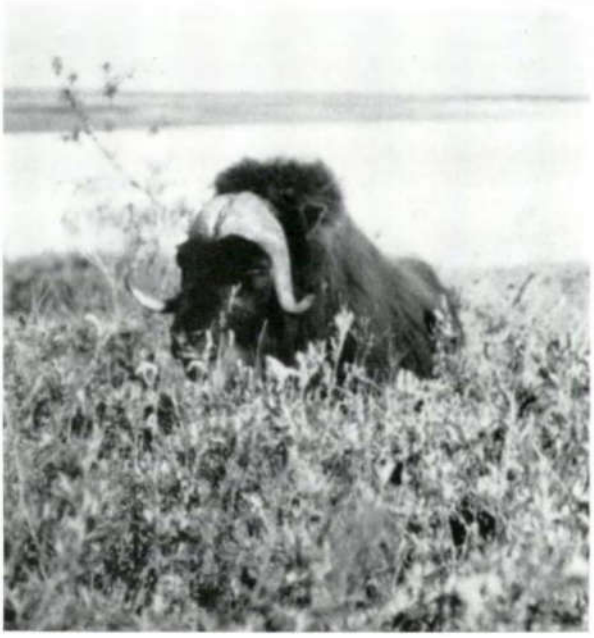
Above and below Lookout Point are abrupt bluffs of sand. High ones are the more attractive with old white

Looking up the Thelon River from a site about fifteen miles above Hornby Point.

ERNEST KUYT

Muskox browsing on willows beside the Thelon.

DON THOMAS



spruces. Here the fluffy, tawny, cute arctic ground squirrels sat stiffly by their burrows to watch us pass. Lower sand ridges are more widely extensive along this part of the Thelon. These are sparsely grown to strand-wheat (*Elymus*) grazed by geese before it is tall and too tough.

On down the river were great cliffs where rough-legged hawks and peregrine falcons nested. On the southerly, lee sides of banks snow was still deeply drifted, and on a bar ice pans were stacked higher than our heads. Camps by spruce clumps were replaced by ones on the vast tundra barrens. Temperature varied from 27°F to the 60s, and to 85°F on the sunny sand, but the average was low, and colder eastward. Occasionally frost silvered the tundra, dew froze on our tarps, water froze in containers, and sometimes our hands and feet were cold while we were in the canoes.

Of lemmings and mice we saw only signs, saw but one arctic hare, though many droppings, and but one arctic owl eating a trout on a snow-bank. We saw but one family of arctic foxes, at the entrance to Beverly Lake.

Four fuzzy brown pups peered at us from their den atop the bluff. Hundreds of geese strained their paddles and wings ahead of us, honking continually, then when pressed, sinking low, and even diving. Flocks of them pattered noisily up the sand-beach to hide in the willow thickets. They eat young grasses and sedge flowers at this time of year. Occasional geese differed much, and proved to be white-fronted geese. Some of these nervously herded goslings ahead of them. Mergansers, other ducks, and occasional yellow-billed and common loons flew or swam by, a few with fuzzy chicks. Great whistling swans, always in pairs, took off from time to time. Flocks of jaegers deftly manoeuvred over river and barrens, but they did not dive on longspurs as expected; they nabbed gnats off water or shingle beach. Arctic terns hovered, heads bent down, and dived for young fish, but not minnows, there being none. Small fish are young of large ones or nine-spined sticklebacks or little miller's thumb sculpins. Herring gulls ogled our fish-cleaning jobs. Twice we saw pairs of tall brown lesser sandhill cranes stalking on the tundra. Often a black and white ptarmigan would whir and soar down by our campsite, to toddle and peer about our tent, cackling. This usually happened in the dim light of middle night.

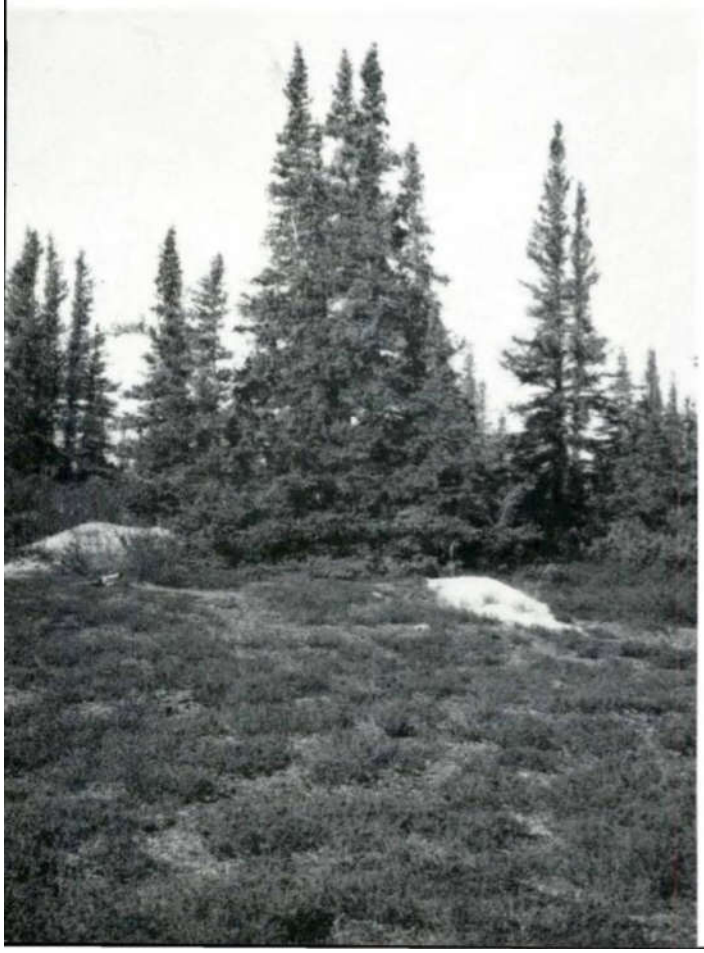
All the way east the herds of thousands of caribou had just passed, travelling north, before we came along, leaving their splayed, four-marked hoof-prints, sometimes accompanied by a pair of wolf tracks by the river, and caribou had left their clotted hair on the water. We saw straggling herds from time to time, swimming, or briefly nibbling or resting, or more often swinging along at an easy, but very fast trot, all going north or northeast.

Eight miles northwest of Aberdeen Lake we camped by some hunting Eskimos and a couple of white men led by Mr Ruttan who were ear-tagging swimming caribou from motored canoes, aided by Eskimos, in a wildlife research study. Eskimos here still live on caribou. They dry strips of meat and split long-bones for marrow, often eating both raw, along with bannock and tea. They are generally very pleasant people, and though rather shy, not diffident. Few speak any English. Most are literate in their own Inuit, using a missionary's syllabics.

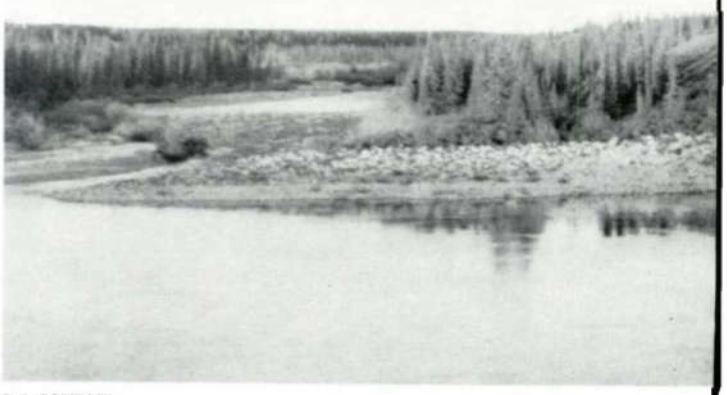
Here, near the Eskimo camp we awaited more possible herds of migrating caribou and calmer weather to allow us to travel. Caribou did swim the river in sight above us, then stride on northward, but only small herds appeared. The Eskimos watched for them with binoculars. When Henry and Wayne were out on the tundra filming a herd, and I was crouched on the sandy shore collecting my first yellow arctic poppies and the oddly "displaced" sea-beach chickweed (*Arenaria peploides*) I heard three distant shots. I looked up at the passing caribou I had been watching. A bull at the rear of the herd staggered in circles, fell, arose, fell for good. An Eskimo, followed by Henry and Wayne, walked to where it lay. Later, all three men brought the dressed-out carcass, including viscera, head, and velvet antlers, to camp by canoe. The Eskimo hunter's wife showed Henry how she removed the sinews along the back and split them into thread to sew skin clothing.

These people often wear caribou skin boots, mittens, and parkas. The women's version of the parka is draped and fringed, and a rear drape includes a big sack which accommodates a baby. Eskimos also wear Hudson's Bay Company woollens and rubber boots. Hoods of parkas,

ERNEST KUTT



A clump of white spruce at Hornby Point, beneath which is a wolf den. The tributary to the Thelon with its spruce wood banks opposite Hornby Point (below) was photographed at sundown, about 10 p.m.



G. B. ROSSBACH

either of skin or cloth, may be trimmed with fur of wolf or wolverine. Many of the men smoke pipes, most purchased at the Hudson's Bay store at Baker Lake, but some home-made with soapstone bowls. Tobacco is carried in a big pouch slung on the shoulder. The Eskimo campers' tents are of canvas, but I am told that the women often make them by sewing the pieces together. Accompanying these hunters are their dogs, of which I saw two types in separate teams, one being wolf-like, *i.e.*, tall, with straight tails, the other chunkier, with curled tails. An idle kamutik, a long, narrow sledge, lay on the shore.

Near this camp on a high point stood a big square wooden box. We learnt it was a grave. On a point to the west we had seen one open pit grave covered with rotting, furry skin clothing and mittens. A rusted rifle probably of a latter 1890s make lay upon a rock above it. We disturbed nothing.

It was still never dark, yet rarely comfortably warm. Birds still sang late and early. Swarms of gnats, a few butterflies, moths, ground beetles, a small water beetle, stone-flies, ground spiders, and a common earwig-like beach-crawler were usually active until evening or even later. Mosquitoes were out in hungry force any time if temperature rose above 40° F. They covered us and the tent, whined monotonously, and followed the canoes in calm weather. I would sit of an evening on a bluff to observe, listen, contemplate, and smoke, and watch the lights, shades, and delicate colours change across the tundra, lichen barrens, rocks, cliffs, or swirling water, or creaking, mist-covered ice-pack—but never sitting for long, being driven to the tent by the hungry horde. I have many blood relations up there now.

Deterrents to progress were wind, usually north, and dangerous waves. Waves often kept us ashore, as did endless pack-ice on Aberdeen Lake from July 15 to 26. Rapids either speeded us by the banks or, occasionally, worried us with their huge standing waves rising below some boulder deep under the heaving, gurgling, sucking surface. Wayne and Henry were able stern-men in rapids, however. One series of rapids forced a very necessary mile of portage. We waited a total of over two weeks for wind to abate, or to rise and blow away the ice. Hold-ups afforded me time to explore afoot, collect and dry plants, and write diary. I was never idle for long. I climbed some 640-foot hills with ancient shore-cliffs lining their flanks above the northeast shore of Aberdeen Lake, passed old Eskimo hunting camps strewn with cracked bones, skulls, antlers, and a few discarded utensils. I viewed the sweep of the lake and river we were to follow when ice blew out, and I spotted the many promontories with humanoid Eskimo cairn markers. I grubbed plants until my pant knees were gone, adding arctic pincushion (*Diapensia lapponica*) to my collection. I took colour photos. Finally, on a divide, I looked northward over the endless barrens and lakes towards the Back River and towards the Arctic Sea over a hundred miles beyond the horizon.

On the large lakes the north wind and immediately following waves can swamp an unwary or too bold canoeist, especially if his canoe is heavily loaded. Water is frigid and wide, allowing little hope for a swimmer. We were crossing a broad stretch of water on the so-called "Delta", a network of channels curving between islands west of Beverly Lake, when a squall and waves hit us so quickly I barely had time to lay down my camera and bend to the paddle to help Wayne head into the breaking crests. The other canoe scooped in four inches of water, its peril increased by Henry's collie dog, Lady. Suddenly and unusually she misbehaved by leaping upon the high load and scuttling along the length of the

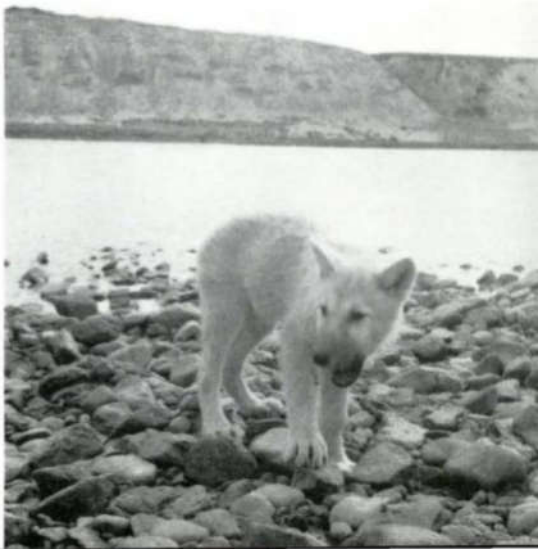
H. BRIGGS

Migrating caribou on the run.

G. B. ROSSBACH

One of our canoes passing the usual snow-drift dropped by the north wind on a south-facing bank.

A two-month-old wolf on a shingle beach of the Thelon. ERNEST KUYT



Finnie River, near the mouth, just south of Lookout Point. The woods are predominantly white spruce. ERNEST KUYT

canoe. Both canoes made it to the sand beach where we waited out the wind and ate.

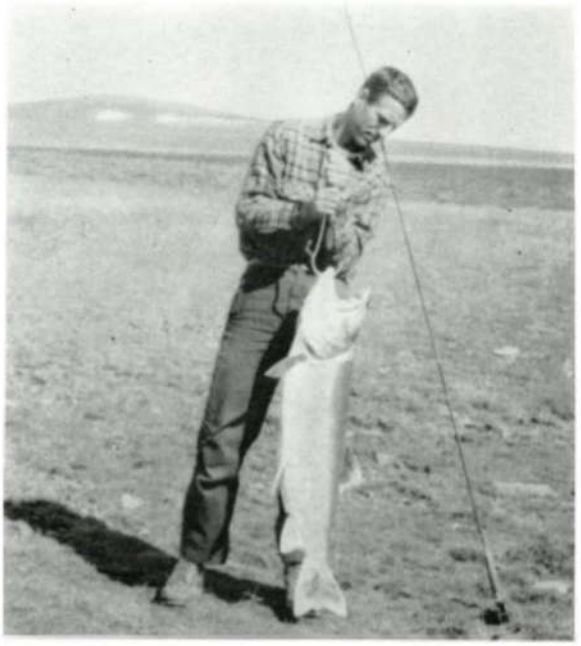
Just before entering Schultz Lake, the last big lake west of Baker Lake, we passed, on the north side of the Thelon, a series of prominent knobs of sandstone, conglomerate, and a bit of granitic rock, so identified by a surveying geologist. A few abrupt volcanic faults split these hills. Such topography was a change. Most of the bed-rock is the widespread sandstone, though glacial erratics can vary. Later we passed more granitic rock and greenstone. We camped on a low, wet, mossy-sedgy shore and meadow below an escarpment for a well-needed rest. The next day I discovered a thus-far new flora on the disturbed raw clay of the frost-boils or solifluction polygons, on a plateau: brilliant yellow and violet species of Oxytropis being the most conspicuous among them. I was to see such plants increasingly, on banks and tundra as well, eastward to Baker Lake. Already, a common pink Hedysarum, the bright yellow Arnica, and succulent, antiscorbutic Oxyria had appeared. Heretofore, the white-petaled Dryas had dominated the frost-boils and disturbed spots. I believe the change was primarily due to added salts in the less sandy clay soil. We were now in a rather recent marine subsidence area. Schultz Lake is one hundred and twenty-five feet above sea-level. Below this lake in the Halfway Hills I found marine shells of scallops and another bivalve in the clay of a stream-bank.

It was on this shelving shore that Wayne and Bill caught the biggest lake trout on the trip. Wayne's was hooked on a fly-rod. Though the big fish's fin arose above the shallow water, it was still not within reach. I thought it would break loose or break the rod. Instead of playing it for an hour, as ardent fishermen tell of doing, Wayne managed to manoeuvre this lively heft of dinner in circling stages to the stern of the beached canoe in ten minutes. I gaffed it in the gills and dragged it ashore. Though our weighing scales had been earlier stepped on and demolished, we estimated the trout weighed about thirty pounds. When Henry had snapped a picture of the fish we noted that two gawky sandhill cranes were practically looking over his shoulder.

Northeast of us an aircraft took off. So did we. Near the western end of Schultz Lake, several hours, miles, islands, and new plants eastward, and under the abrupt, snow-rimmed 640-foot bump called Whalebone Hill, we met a crew of three Dominion geologists led by J. A. Donaldson returning on foot to their tent. They were most hospitable and informative, but jokingly disgruntled over the breakdown of their reconnaissance helicopter

The oldest (56) and ablest Eskimo hunter smokes a home-made pipe. H. BRIGGS

At the Eskimo caribou-hunters' camp our canoe was inspected with interest and outside the tent one of the ladies agreed to let Henry make a tape recording of conversation and a song in Inuit. G. B. ROSSBACH



Wayne Dunbar with the biggest lake trout, caught just above Schultz Lake. H. BRIGGS

eight miles inland. They had just walked back to camp.

After eating and talking with this group of men, collecting specimens, changing plant driers, and profiting by a night's rest, we made use of a most unusual glassy calm by motoring eastward the length of Schultz Lake. We passed hills of sandstone, then granitic rock, left Whalebone and its snow-drifts on the western horizon. All morning we approached an eastern mirage of rising, floating, and lowering bluffs and snowbanks. We passed myriads of black gnats of two sizes, standing on the calm water, just emerged from pupal skins, with occasional long-legged craneflies. Trout sometimes arose to suck in the gnats. Mosquitoes followed us in a slowly diminishing mob. We passed rock reefs, terns and jaegers, a belated, hurried caribou, and finally the cairn-studded rock islands in the shallow eastern end of Schultz Lake.

Rapids roared ahead. At the sudden constriction and south bend at the end of the lake we found ourselves in narrow, tumultuous rapids with fearsome standing waves. We had to head into the worst of these. We speeded by high ledges of hard, resistant rock which caused these rapids, into safe, but fast water. These rapids are not mentioned in notes of travellers to my knowledge. The well-known and expected bigger ones are about eight miles below Schultz Lake.

At the latter rapids we met eight caribou-hunting Eskimos who kindly speeded our portage of a mile to only about three hours. We paid them and gave them all our fish and bread, which they immediately relished, but we needed a Galilee stretch of loaves and fishes for this multitude. During my own three carries here, I not only nabbed a stack of plants, but hungrily crunched sea-biscuits, which no one else liked, though I found them

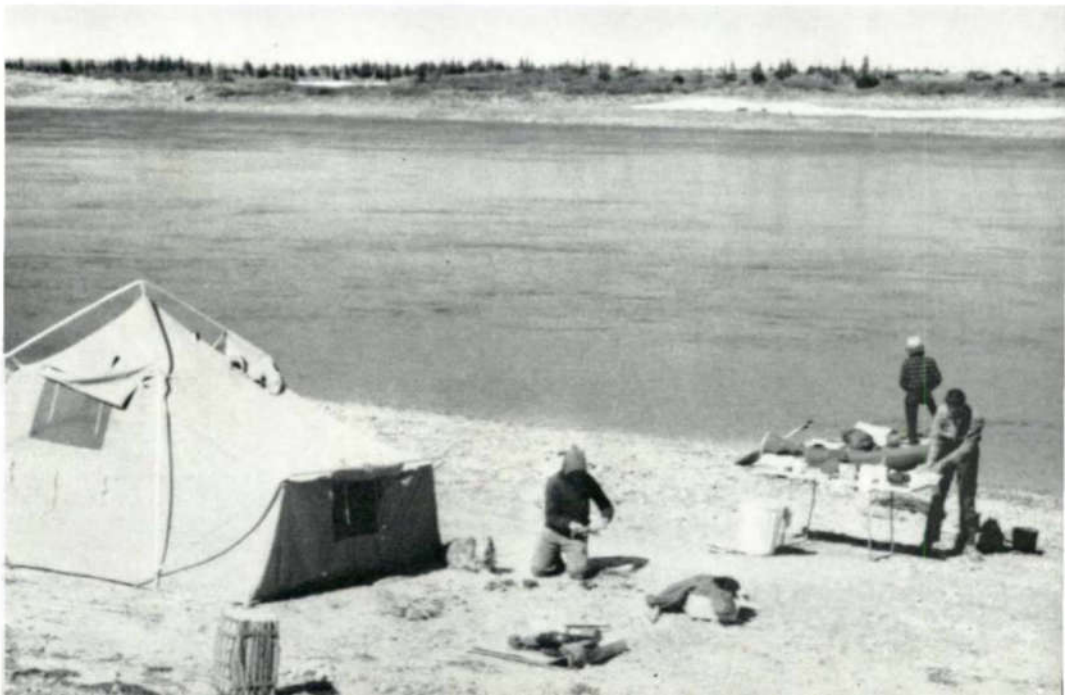
quite delicious. I always enjoyed eating, whether the usual freeze-dried variations or daily fish. Ground squirrels watched us work and eat. Two sat perkily against a sunlit slab of rock covered with yellow and green lichen above their burrow. Pink Epilobium, yellow Arnica, and Castilleja grew on the bank. Wild white rapids dashed and roared. Eskimos ate supper. We were out of film.

Next day we camped on a meadow by a flowery cascade brook between the abrupt rocky ridges of the Halfway Hills. This was to be our last camp, but we didn't know this yet. Rains were more frequent from the lakes eastward, but a drizzling night did not spoil our visit at this beautiful site, and as always, we left it beautiful. (A word here to future campers: As urban dwellers increasingly spread, crowd, and hurry, increasing numbers of people seek experience in a sadly shrinking wilderness. I hope those who travel these northern rivers will note that we carried no firearms nor needed any for protection or illegal food, since no animals threatened us and we carried our own concentrated packets of freeze-dried foods. We added to our diet by fishing. Though we burnt wood for cooking when available above the lakes, we always used dead branches and cut none of the meagre forest, alive or dead, and east of Beverly Lake we cooked solely on a gasoline Coleman stove. Finally, I believe one would not identify our campsites by any debris of cans or paper.)

At the last rapids below the Halfway Hills and eight miles above Baker Lake, and in threatening weather, on July 29th, a motored canoe-load of Eskimos overtook us. These excellent navigators lashed our canoes to theirs and hauled us the last miles to Baker Lake Hudson's Bay Store, saving us a slow, wet, cold, windy finale to our paddling and camping. Splashed, and stiff with cold and cramping, we were glad to reach the post, even though later we increasingly missed the open barrens and the simple, but simply beautiful solitude. That first night at the post I attended church service. I truly enjoyed the company of the Anglican missionary and a hundred of the 400 or 500 Eskimos in and out of Baker Lake. The Eskimos sang very slowly the hymns we best know and like. They sang in Inuit, I in English. The Reverend and Mrs Whitton were most kind to us. I dried plants and slept on a bed in a small house used at times as a Sunday school. On its wall was a painting of a fur-clad Mary and Joseph with Jesus bundled in skins, receiving furs and carvings from an Eskimo, an Indian, and a Hudson's Bay Company man, while a husky dog and a caribou watched. I replenished my supply of pipe tobacco, which ran out the day I arrived, ate chocolate-covered cherries, saw movies, and stuffed food into me at the Department of Transport with pleasant company of transient government workers, at $2.50 per meal. I noted how simple, basic things of life had become most important.

The gorgeous display of pink, purple, yellow, and white flowers on disturbed foundations, roads, and beach, or on tundra or ledges deserves special mention. They were at their brief height this close of July: arctic fireweed, with gaudy pink flowers, yellow poppy, five-fingers, Draba, Astragalus and Oxytropis, both loco-weeds, chickweeds, daisies, a native dandelion, the ever-present, fleshy, clustered white saxifrage, and lush grasses. The showy, pink Lapland rosebay, a Rhododendron, and ubiquitous white Labrador tea of the sterile barrens were scarcely present here in this richer soil.

The heavens turned the tap on and off most of the time. It was here at Baker Lake, between the scudding, purple-black clouds on the first of August that I saw my first star since June the twentieth in Edmonton. ♦



One of our riverside camps, with Wayne preparing meal, Bill Meier contemplating chances of hooking the next feed, and George Rossbach, as usual, pressing plants.

H. BRIGGS

The Bear behind the Paw

BY C. R. HARINGTON

HAVE YOU EVER HEARD the story about polar bears covering their faces with their paws when hunting seals? You may wonder why they should do this anyway. What has a bear to hide? Well, a coal black muzzle against white fur and the glistening white surface of the pack ice in spring provides a remarkable point of contrast. As a matter of fact, Roald Amundsen, the famous polar explorer, has ably described the contrast after observing a bear near Victoria Island in the Canadian Arctic: "Suddenly it turned its head round toward us, and then we could see its black snout quite distinctly. No other object in this kingdom of the Snow Queen, no stone, no bare spot, no dark shadow is so black as the snout of a Polar bear. It cannot be mistaken even miles away."

Seals, the staple food of hungry polar bears, can see quite well under water or at the surface. They are vigilant even when sleeping near their breathing holes on the sea ice, and waken regularly at short intervals to look around before dozing off again. Eskimos have problems shooting seals, and I have often seen them don white parkas or hide behind white shields to approach their prey more easily. How can seal-hunting polar bears avoid observation? They must get much closer than the Eskimos, yet they carry an alarm signal in front of them all the time. The black spot!

Being curious about this matter, I had the opportunity to consult an old book called *Animals of All Countries*, which stated that when a polar bear "... has to do with a seal he creeps or trails himself forward on the ice, and is then said to conceal with his fore-paws the only part of his body that contrasts with the white colour of the snow—his large black nose". Another early reference is W. G. B. Murdoch's book *Modern Whaling and Bear Hunting*, in which he remarks that a polar bear "... will hold his yellowy paws over his black nose, so I am told, when stalking a seal ...". He adds "... I can vouch myself that one endeavoured to hide both his black nose and yellow body when he stalked me." Unfortunately,

For the past ten years C. R. Harington, a wildlife biologist, has been making annual visits to the Arctic, the latter years studying the polar bear.

the statement is too general to be of much value in this case, because it may refer to bears using ice hummocks for cover—a fact that is well known.

Fridtjof Nansen, the renowned Arctic explorer and scholar, mentioned this anecdote in 1925, but said he had never seen a polar bear in its nose-covering act. Eskimos are aware of the story too, because some from Pelly Bay told Father Franz Van de Velde that polar bears hid their snouts with their paws when after seals. In his interesting book *Inuk*, Father Roger Buliard states that when a bear hunts seals basking on smooth expanses of ice, he goes "very slowly, carefully hiding his black snout with his white paw". We know that Buliard has a great deal of first-hand experience in the North, but did he see the activity himself—is it really true? I began to wonder when I came across the following apparently unusual versions of the same story. J. G. Jennov, a Greenland trapper and writer, remarked in 1956 that the polar bear "... sometimes pushes a little piece of ice in front of its little black nose to hide it". Peter Freuchen evidently thought that bears used such devious methods when stalking seals, for "... there are too many accounts of its holding up a piece of ice for concealment to doubt that it does so". But then we know that unfounded gossip can spread like wildfire. Evidence is insufficient to support or deny the statement. Yet of all the stories, perhaps J. L. Minner's is most unusual. He says polar bears sometimes extend their tongues to hide their black noses when after seals. Bear tongues are blackish too, and it would be stretching a point to believe that this was a form of camouflage.

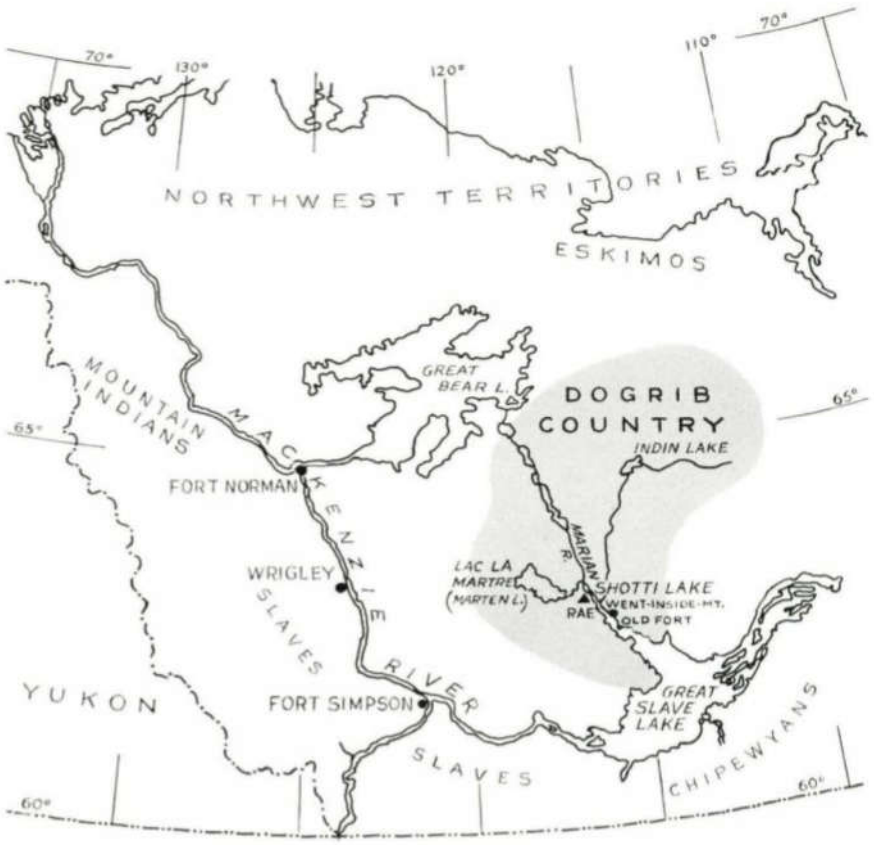
We are left with the kernel of the story—at times polar bears may hide their black noses to prevent their prey, the seals, from becoming alarmed and escaping. And as far as I can see, there are only two clear pieces of evidence about what actually takes place. Once again I must refer to Freuchen's detailed account of polar bears in a report of the Fifth Thule Expedition. He wrote that the bear "... is always cunning enough to move against the wind towards its quarry and preferably with the land as a background, just as man has learned to do. In this manner its black eyes and snout will not betray it so easily, but will merge with the details of the mountains behind. Nevertheless, the bear is aware of its conspicuous colour at these places. *I myself have seen it covering its snout with the left paw.*"

Dr Kare Rodahl, a prominent Arctic physiologist, also gives a first-hand description. Many a time Rodahl watched bears crawling towards their victims during his stay at Clavering Island, East Greenland in 1939-40. One warm spring day he saw a polar bear approach a bearded seal sleeping on the edge of a drifting ice floe. The bear swam underneath the water toward the seal, and occasionally "... raised his head to keep an eye on his prey, *covering the black spot at the tip of his nose with his left front paw.*"

Stories of this nose-covering activity in polar bears seem fairly common and widespread. But the only definite reports known to me are from the North American Arctic. Although some desirable details are lacking in both Freuchen's and Rodahl's accounts, I am inclined to believe them. What do you think? ◆

R.C.N.

Associate professor of anthropology at the University of Iowa, Dr Helm has made a number of field trips for the National Museum of Canada and published several studies of the Athapaskan people.



TALES FROM THE DOGRIBS

BY JUNE HELM AND VITAL THOMAS

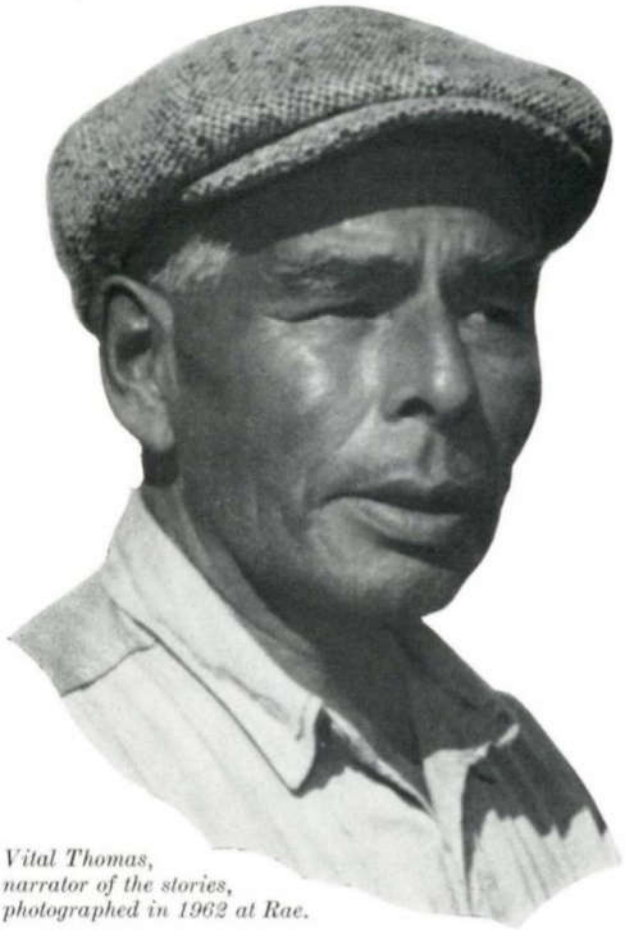
Behind the ethnologist's written report are his anonymous collaborators—all those members of the society under study who, by their words and actions, teach the ethnologist what he needs to know. When the ethnologist works with an 'informant,' a person native to the community who consciously assumes the task of instructing the ethnologist in the ways of his people, the collaboration is truly a co-authorship.

A good informant not only conscientiously tries to answer the questions of the ethnologist. He also guides him to the questions he should ask. And by revealing his own special knowledge and interests, an informant can provide the ethnologist with unexpected windfalls.

It was not my intention during my 1962 field season among the Dogribs of Rae to collect folk tales and legends. I was interested in past and present patterns of kinship and social organization. It was my good fortune to meet Vital Thomas, whose lively memory and sustained efforts were invaluable in filling my notebooks on these topics. But Vital had interests of his own, and in the course of our daily sessions, or over a cup of tea afterwards, some incident discussed that day would recall to him first one folk-tale and then another.

The Dogrib tales presented here are but a few of those told to me that summer by Vital Thomas. Perhaps I should have persuaded him to write the stories down himself. Certainly I am co-author only in an editorial capacity. Not only are these Vital's stories, shortened and emended but retaining some of the cadence of his speech, but they would never have been recorded had not Vital decided that they should go in the ethnographic record of the Dogrib people.

Some of the tales deal with the farthest mythological past, telling us how things came to be. Others recount in dramatic perspective critical times in tribal history. Other tales tell us how things are, the nature of animals and of man and of magic medicine, and of how things should be—demonstrating proper Dogrib manners and morals. Of each of these kinds of stories, a few have been selected to provide a Dogrib Sampler—*J. H.*



Vital Thomas, narrator of the stories, photographed in 1962 at Rae.

HOW THINGS CAME TO BE

The Dogrib are one branch of the widespread American Indian linguistic family known as the Dêné or Athapaskan Indians. They share with other northern Dêné the episodic saga of the Two Brothers, called, in the Dogrib tongue, Sazia ("Little Bear") and Zhamonzha ("Walks Around the World"). In their childhood, so the stories go, together the two brothers played many superhuman but cruel tricks on their fellows. Eventually, however, they separated. Sazia went down to the Arctic coast. Zhamonzha remained in the bush country of the Mackenzie River drainage, creating many of the natural features of the region. Here is part of his saga.

ZHAMONZHA AND HIS BEAVER WIFE

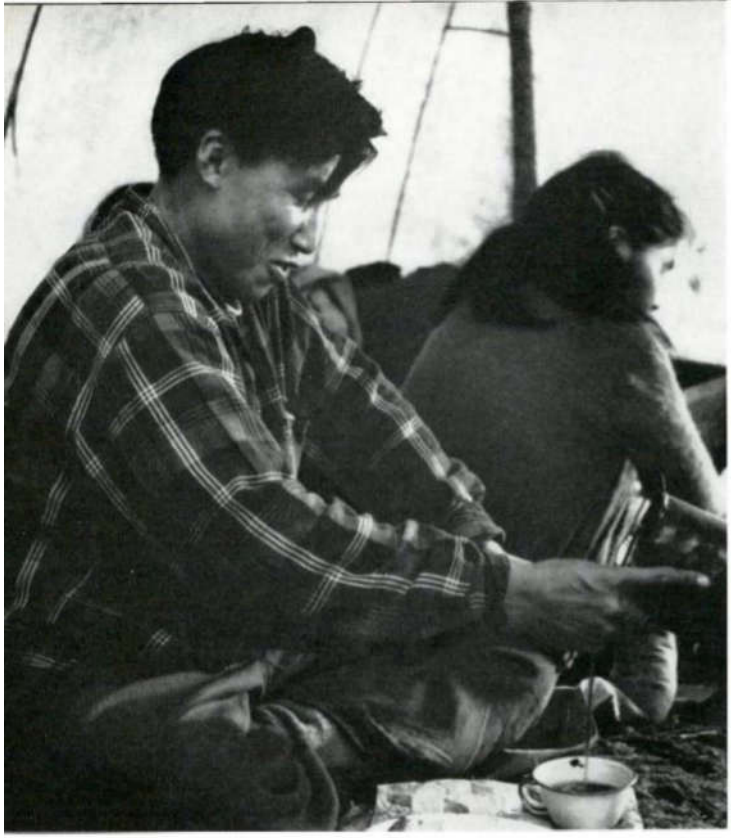
Zhamonzha found a girl. She was all by herself; her family had been killed. Zhamonzha said to her, "We might as well stay together." But he told her, "I never stop for anything. I just keep going. If you want to follow me, alright."

So the girl followed, followed. But she told Zhamonzha, "Don't ever step in grassy water or over a little creek. Just keep on the dry places. Don't ever go across a wet spot. If you do, you'll be sorry." For a while Zhamonzha did as she told him, but one day he came to a tiny creek, a little wet place with not more than an inch of water. "I don't think she'll care about this, there's hardly any water." So Zhamonzha crossed it and kept going. But finally he stopped and began to wonder, "Where did that girl go?" He waited and waited and at last turned back. Where he had crossed that little grassy swamp there was a big lake, and right in the middle of the lake it was all pushed into a big beaver house. When Zhamonzha saw the beaver, he said, "Who are you? And the beaver said, "It's too bad. I can't follow you any more. I used to be your wife but I've turned into a beaver now." And Zhamonzha answered, "If I ever catch you, you'll turn into a woman again." So he started to chase the beaver.

When they came to Marian River, he lost her. He looked for her everywhere, digging into the bush. And around Shotti Lake today, there are all kinds of little creeks, made when Zhamonzha dug in the earth. But he couldn't find her. When he got to Marian Lake he was so tired he sat down on Shiagu. That's a mountain on Murphy's Point. Way up on the top of it you will see a flat rock. Zhamonzha made that when he sat to listen to which way Beaver had gone. He heard a big noise of a beaver chewing down toward Old Fort [on the North Arm of Great Slave Lake]. Old Fort is on a long, long point. That point is the dam Beaver was trying to make there, across to the other side. Just before Zhamonzha got there Beaver saw her husband so she dived and hid. Zhamonzha followed her around the south shore of Great Slave Lake right around to the west side. Finally he came to the end of a point where he heard the beaver again. That point is called Tsaken, "Beaver House". There Beaver had made a house and there she had a baby.

Zhamonzha dug into the top of the beaver house. You can see the hill where he dug his hole. He took the young one out of the house and killed it. The mother fled down the Mackenzie River and Zhamonzha followed her, carrying the body of the young one.

There is a burning place down the Mackenzie [the smouldering beds of lignite above Fort Norman first noted by Alexander Mackenzie in 1789]. You can see smoke there once in a while today, winter and summer. That's where Zhamonzha cooked the little one. As he was cooking the young one, the grease melted down and started to burn and Zhamonzha said, "This will last forever, this smoke." And that's what has been burning there until now.



Alexis Flanki, Lac la Martre Dogrib, enjoys a cup of tea.

THE ORIGIN OF THE DOGRIBS

At the start there were no Dogribs. There was some kind of war, maybe between the Slaveys and the Chipewyan or Eskimo: we don't know where the woman came from. Anyway, there was a war and everyone was killed except one girl who hid herself. Afterwards, as she went around the deserted camps to pick up drymeat, she found a black dog still alive. She started to move, looking for rabbit tracks, some place where she could make a living. And she took the black dog with her. Finally she made a camp with a tipi of spruce trees and she put out rabbit snares. She lived by herself there with the black dog.

She lived in that camp so long that finally she was in the family way, although she didn't know where it came from. But when the baby was born, it wasn't a baby—it was five pups. At first she was ashamed of herself and just threw the pups away, but finally she made a kennel for the little pups and fed them every day.

Each day she went out to the snares. But she began to notice when she came back that there were the tracks of little kids in the ashes of her camp. "But," she asked herself, "how come? There is nothing here but the pups playing." So one day she decided to try to catch them. She pretended to go to the snares but she slipped back. She peeked through a hole in her tipi, and inside she saw five little children playing. There were three boys and two girls.

When the mother saw those little kids playing, gee whiz, she wanted to grab them, and she ran right inside the tent. But she only caught hold of two boys and one girl. The boy and girl that she didn't catch turned back into dogs. Those two pups she killed. But the ones she had grabbed never turned into pups again. And that's how the Dogrib people started. Those two boys that she raised were the finest hunters and the bravest fighters and the best medicine men that ever lived.

HOW THE BARRENS CAME TO BE AND WENT-INSIDE-MOUNTAIN GOT ITS NAME

There is a mountain across from Karelin [at the mouth of Marian River]. We Indians call it Wezitsatla—"Got-in-the-Mountain" or "Went-Inside-Mountain." There's supposed to be somebody in there. This is how it happened.

Once there was a great medicine man. One day he went hunting and left his wife behind, alone in the camp. But a young fellow was out hunting and he found that woman alone. The young fellow wanted the woman to go away with him. Finally the woman said, "I'm scared to do that because my husband is a great medicine man. There is no way to hide from him. But I'll go with you anyway.',

So the young fellow took the woman with him. When the husband came home and found his wife was not there he started to run about, trying to find out which way she went. The young man and the woman had headed out toward where the Barrens are now. In those days there were no Barrens, just bush country. But the husband, looking for them, got so mad that he started a fire to burn the bush down so that he could find them. And that's how the Barrens were made. Before then, the bush went right straight through to the Eskimo.

The young man and woman ran from the fire back toward Marian Lake. When they got there they climbed up on that mountain. The young man lifted up a rock just like you'd lift a tent flap, and he told the woman to go inside. Then he followed her and he closed the rock back again.

When the medicine man came he could hear them talking, so he knew they were inside the mountain. He started tearing the rocks out of the ground, but as he would lift one rock from one place he would hear them talking someplace else. Each time he lifted a rock they were in some other part of the mountain. Finally he got tired. He still couldn't reach them, so he said, "So long as the world goes on you are never coming to the surface of the ground again." And he left them.

Since then, sometimes Dogrib medicine men can hear the sound of those two people inside the mountain.

THE FUR TRADE

In the last half of the eighteenth century, first the Crees and then those bands of Déné peoples known collectively as the Chipewyans entered into the fur trade. Both of these nations received muzzle loaders in return for their furs and began campaigns of pillage and slaughter among the Déné peoples, from the lands south of Great Slave Lake to beyond the Arctic Circle. In many of their legends, the Slavey and the Dogrib people recall their defencelessness before the ferocity of their enemies. And both the Slaveys and Dogribs tell the story of the heroine who first brought word of the "Pale Men" back to her people, so that they too might trade for guns with which to defend themselves.

Here is Vital Thomas's version of this well-known legend.

THE CAPTIVE WOMAN

The Chipewyan were the worst people of all. They didn't have a friend anyplace. Fight, fight, fight. They killed everybody—Slavey, Dogrib, Loucheux, Eskimo. The Chipewyan never gave others a chance to fight back. At daylight a hundred and fifty or two hundred Chipewyans would move up to a camp and jump right on top of the poor Indians or Eskimos caught sleeping. They would kill them all with clubs and spears. Then they would take the scalps and carry them all the way down to Calgary or someplace and sell them to the Hudson's Bay Company. Sometimes the traders would say "What kind of person is this? This looks human." But the Chipewyans would answer "No, it's not human. It's a kind of animal that lives in the water." And the traders never knew they were human scalps.

One time, the Chipewyans killed so many Indians they were overloaded. They couldn't carry all the scalps by themselves. So they said, "We'll keep one woman alive to help with the packing and sewing and to make moccasins and cook." So they took that woman with them on their trip Outside. But when they came to the traders' place they told her to hide because of course they didn't want her to show herself.

The woman watched them packing a bale of scalps into a mud house. Since she had never seen a White man's house before she thought it was a mud house like the beavers make. She knew that the Chipewyans would kill her later, so she said to herself, "I can die here or die on the road. What's the difference?" She slipped up to the kitchen door after the men had gone in the other door, and she made signs to a White man there to hide her.

When the Chipewyans finished their trading they went out to look for the woman, but she was gone. They went back to the store, but the White men said they had not seen her. The Chipewyans wanted to fight for that woman. The traders didn't like the way they were acting, so before the Chipewyans could make trouble they took them to the warehouse, locked the door and set it on fire, and they roasted all those fellows to death.

Then they asked the woman to tell her story. She told them what had been going on for years and years, how she had been brought by the Chipewyans to the White men's country and how through the years the Chipewyans had "killed hundreds and hundreds of my people."

The woman stayed with the Pale Men all through the winter. They taught her to shoot with a muzzle loader. When March came the Pale Men asked the woman "Can you make it to your country?" And she said "Yes, I think I can make it." So the traders sent two guides to go with her. They took her to some place around Slave Lake. Then the two men said "We'll let you go now if you think you can make." And she said "Yes, I know where I am now." So they left her and she kept on going. She was packing snowshoes, rifle, and groceries.

She found an old track of snowshoes and started to follow it. Two young men were on top of a hill looking for caribou. In the distance they saw a guy with a rifle walking. When they saw that they got scared, because only the Crees and the Chipewyans had guns. One of the boys said, "Let's follow him. If he is looking for trouble we will kill him." So they began to trail him. Looking at the track, finally one boy said, "This can't be a man, because the step is too short. Let's follow her, she can't do much to two of us." The other fellow was scared, so the first one led. They followed her until she crossed out of the bush onto a lake. And the one fellow told the other, "Have your bow and arrow ready." Then he whistled to her. As soon as she heard the whistle, she turned her head and then just dropped, because she was so glad and so scared at the same time.

She told her story to them. "To the south there are lots of Pale Men who live in mud houses. They are the men who buy the scalps of our people, because the Chipewyans tell they are animal furs. Those Pale Men taught me how to load and shoot a gun. Next year they are coming to this country and they will bring guns like this for us."

So that's the way the Dogrib people found out for the first time about the Pale Men and where the scalps of their people were going. And that woman married the brave man who had followed her and whistled to her.

Lac la Martre boy.
PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR

WHEN THE FIRST PALE MEN CAME

An old fellow told me this story. It must have happened about two hundred years ago.* It is an old story about the first traders, before the priests came.

It was winter and there were no caribou. The Dogribs of Marten Lake were up at the far end of Marten Lake fishing to stay alive. It was hard work chopping through the ice with horn chisels to set their nets.

Some Indians came through and told them that the Pale Men were at the other end of Marten Lake. The Marten Lake people had never seen a white man. So two or three men decided to go down there just for the visit. In those days there were enemies everywhere, strangers who might kill you. So they had to be careful.

When they arrived, the Pale Men came out of a beaver house. That's what it looked like to the Indians; a "mud house" they called it. The Indians were a little afraid at first, but the Pale Men made good signs. They didn't have any interpreters in those days, so they made signs that said "No guns." So the Indians went in their house, and there they saw all kinds of stuff. The Pale Men showed the Indian pelts and all by signs told them, "if you bring us pelts we will give you this stuff." One Indian was given an ice chisel, and to all the other Indians the Pale Men gave Niggerhead tobacco.

That same day the Indians went back home. But they kept smelling that Niggerhead and it stank. They said to each other, "That stink might scare the fish away," so they threw the Niggerhead away in the snow. When they got home the one man showed everybody his ice chisel. As soon as the Indians saw that, they all went crazy for fur. Everyone went out into the bush and began to set deadfalls. Indians had never hunted marten before, but the Pale Men wanted marten skins. Some Indians got twenty, thirty marten. In no time the bunch had over a hundred marten. The fellows who had visited the Pale Men had been shown how to dry the skins. So the Indians dried them and took them to the Pale Men's Camp.

For their furs, the Pale Men gave the Indians ice chisels and files. They showed the Indians how to use the files and how to sharpen them, all by signs. The Pale Men were short of files, so first they began breaking the files in two then into four pieces, and they were still getting fur for it. For one pelt, an Indian got a piece of broken file.

Gee whiz, the Indians sure were glad to have those things. Especially those ice chisels. They had always had to use horn to chisel through the ice before. But when they got home and tried out their ice chisels they found them so good that they said, "The ice chisel is the best thing in the world we could find! The ice is just like rotten wood now."

*Mackenzie's clerk LeRoux first visited Lac la Martre (Marten Lake) in 1789.

HOW THE MEDICINE MAN GOT THE HUDSON'S BAY MAN'S MIND

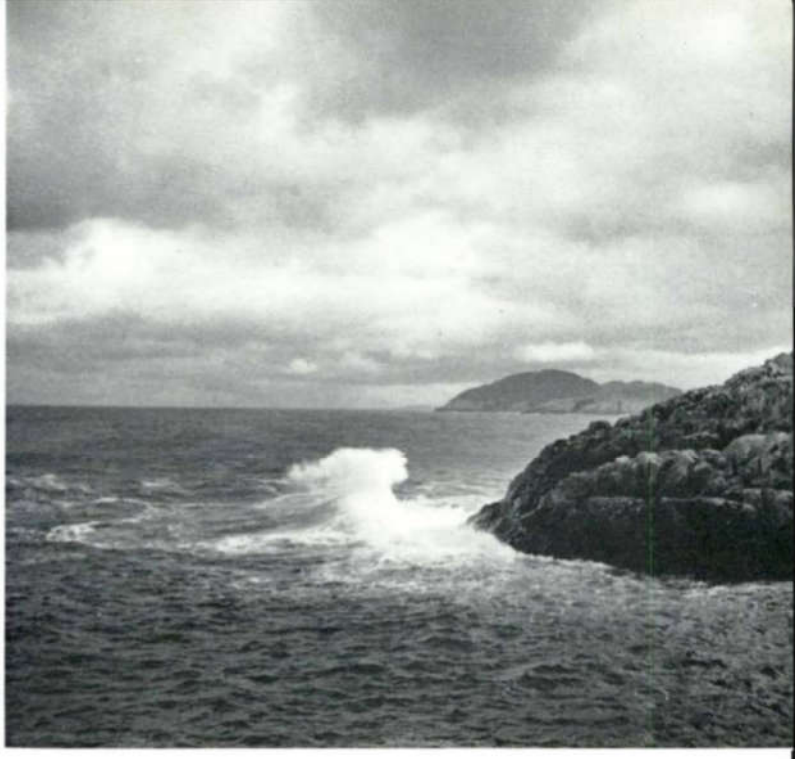
Fort Simpson is an old, old fort. In the fall, the Dogribs used to go to Simpson to trade. One time, one bunch went on ahead of another bunch by four or five days. When they got to Simpson the Hudson's Bay manager wouldn't give them any credit. He was mad at them. He said "You guys haven't paid me from last year. I won't give you a thing." Those poor Indians, there was nothing they could do but go back. They were one day out from the fort when they met the other bunch coming along to trade. They said to the other bunch, "There is no use going on, you might as well turn back. The Hudson's Bay man won't give us credit. There is nothing there for you."

There was an old fellow with the second bunch. He was Seretton's father—not that Seretton who is living here now but another one. That old man listened to all the talking and then he said to his bunch, "Well, we might as well go on in and see what it is like. We can't turn back now." That night when they made camp, those fellows asked the old man if he couldn't change the Hudson's Bay man's mind, because they had come from a long, long way, from Snare Lake or Indin Lake maybe. They offered to pay the old man, so finally he said "I'll do the best I can to change his mind."

So the old man started to sing, "Hey hey, Pale Man! hey hey." And he started to work his arms down into the earth. Finally he was down into the earth about half way up his arms. He was still singing "Hey hey, Pale Man!" when he said, "Here is the man we have been talking about," and he brought the Hudson's Bay man up out of the ground as far as his arm pits. Then he began to rub his hands over the Hudson's Bay man's head as if he was pulling or cupping up water. All of a sudden he clapped his hands loudly and said "Here it is! I got his mind right here in my hands!" And the Hudson's Bay man sank back through the earth. "He has gone home now without his mind. We got to hurry to get there. We got to do our trading fast and go right back because I can't hold his mind very long."

They started out early and got to Simpson about the middle of the day. When they went in the store the Hudson's Bay man acted like he was dreaming, kind of like he was asleep. The Dogribs started to ask for things. And that trader gave them everything they asked for, just like he was half drunk. They got everything they could think of on credit. And then the old man said to them, "We might as well go home now. I can't hold it any longer." And as soon as they got back into the bush the old medicine man sent the Bay man back his mind. ◆

WRECKED ON THE COAST OF LABRADOR



L. HUSTICH

BY LESLIE H. NEATBY

THERE IS A QUAINT and interesting document in the Canadian Archives, belonging to the Quebec Correspondence of the Earl of Dartmouth, who was George III's Secretary of State for the Colonies during the period 1772-5. In the midst of the official despatches from the Governor of Quebec and related papers, in close proximity to a despatch addressed to Sir Guy Carleton by General Gage at Boston suggesting that French Canadians and Indians might be recruited to keep the rebellious Colony of Massachusetts in order, one finds, incongruously enough, a letter relating to Overseas Missions. It is dated 15 January 1775, from King's Road in the London suburb of Chelsea, and signed by James Hutton, who was spokesman for the Moravian Society, the Unitas Fratrum.

Mr Hutton begins thus: "The underwritten begs leave, in the name of the Brethren's Society for the furtherance of the Gospel among the Heathen in those Countries principally which are under the British Dominion, to lay before the Right Honourable the Earl of Dartmouth, and the Lords Commissioners for Trade and Plantations, the following annexed Papers, relating to the Transactions of Their Missionaries in Terra-Labrador, from the latter end of the year 1773 to the month of October 1774."

William Legge, second Earl of Dartmouth, to whom this report was addressed, was less noted, even in his own time, as a statesman than as a Christian philanthropist. His generosity to religious and educational foundations in the Thirteen Colonies—untainted, to a degree very unusual in that age, by sectarian bias—won him the immediate forgiveness of the Americans for the part he played as George III's minister in their Revolutionary War; and he is still revered as one of the founders of Dartmouth College, which was so named in his honour. It was perhaps in his private rather than in his public character that the Moravians addressed him. Their report is paraphrased and put into idiomatic English by their agent, Mr Hutton, though in many passages the editor drops into the plural of the first person, as if he had in person shared in the events which he transcribes.

The opening passage of the report has a touch of humour, of which perhaps neither senders nor recipient were conscious. Dartmouth—to whom the Earl of Bute had unkindly applied the epithet "sanctimonious"—seems to have been shocked at the Eskimo practice of keeping a multiplicity of wives, and to have felt that the missionaries were slack in combating this evil. The Moravians, quite in the style of a modern sociologist, explain that polygamy proceeds not "... from a Lust for variety, but in order to have the assistance of more, or more capable Women, for these are wanted to row the larger boats ... and to do other sorts of work which the men are above doing or are unskilled in; so that plurality of Women are their riches." The Moravians admit that

Author of two books about the Northwest Passage, Professor Neatby is head of the Department of Classics at Acadia University. The material for this article was obtained from Canadian Archives Ref. 1890, p. 57 to Q. 11, 62-97 (C.O. 42, Vol XXXIV) and is here used by permission of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office. The writer's acknowledgements are due to his sister, Dr Hilda Neatby, for drawing his attention to this record.

Nain where in 1771 a mission was established.

ADELAIDE LEITCH

Eskimo women, like other forms of property, are apt to be monopolized by the strong and ruthless, to the great dissatisfaction of the underprivileged and feebler part of the male population; but (like the early Christian Apostles, who refrained from direct attack on the system of slavery) they are not going to provoke hostility by too hasty and rigid an application of the principles which they teach. Dartmouth no doubt felt the good sense of this and went on to read with pleasure of the dignified and resolute tone adopted by the missionaries to check thieving among visitors to the Station, of the building of a new and larger chapel to accommodate worshippers who were flocking to Nain from other native settlements along the coast, of a missionary journey to Golgotha in mid-winter, and of the cultivation in summer of a garden producing "sallad", radishes, small turnips, but no cabbage. He must have noted with the warmest approval how the Moravians, practical Christians, if ever there were, put a stop to the Eskimos going south to rob Europeans of their boats, not by exhortation only, but by setting to with hammer and saw and building wooden boats for the natives themselves.

But the report dealt with other matters besides policy and routine: it is largely taken up with the northern voyage of 1774 which cost the lives of the Reverend Christopher Brasen, physician and director of the Mission, and of one of his chief assistants.

The story of this tragedy is thus introduced by Mr Hutton: "Account of the melancholy incidents attending the loss of the sloop George on her return from Nogvack in 59 D. to the 57 degree, where she on the 14th Sept., run aground on a shoal. There were on board the sloop, Alexander Wilson, Master, Br. John Hill, & two sailors, with Auluk, a young Esquimau as Pilot. Passengers were, the Rev^{d} Br. Brasen, principal of the Mission Labrador, with 3 other Brethren, Messrs. Jens Haven, Christian Lister, & Gottfried Lehman."

The purpose of the cruise was to make search northwards for possible sites for mission stations in order to make closer contact with natives who had been coming from a distance to receive the ministrations of the Brethren at Nain. Government permission had been obtained for this piece of exploration, and the sloop *George* sent from St John's in Newfoundland to carry it into effect. We are not told how the expenses of this journey were to be defrayed: the cost and risk involved in carrying a 25-ton sloop with a crew of four from St John's to Nain and thence north into uncharted waters under the pilotage of a native with presumably little knowledge of seagoing craft would have taxed the resources of the Mission; nor is it likely that Wilson, supposing him to have owned the vessel, would have furnished gratuitiously so considerable a service. Except for John Hill, the crew were not connected with the Mission: their kindness and sympathy are more than once acknowledged with an emphasis which proves that they were outsiders, bound to the Order by no tie or obligation. Apparently the enterprise was not assisted by the State; for official "permission" alone is mentioned; and elsewhere Hutton thanks Lord Dartmouth for the "kind opinion of the Government" with no acknowledgement of material aid. Possibly times were slack and Wilson lent his services cheaply: he was a devout man, who later joined with the surviving Brethren in solemn thanks for his personal deliverance from the catastrophe which had cost him his ship.

Whatever the terms of her charter, the sloop put out from Nain early in September 1774 with her crew of five and her four passengers, and cruised up the coast to 59°N. There it was decided to end the survey as the pilot's knowledge of those waters did not extend beyond that latitude. (They were near Nachvak Fiord, about a hundred miles below Cape Chidley and Hudson Strait.) September 14th found them coasting homeward, carrying mainsail only with three reefs, before a rousing wind from the northwest. For a time visibility was obscured by squalls of rain and snow, and they barely missed striking on a sunken rock. At 1 p.m. the wind subsided

a little, and more sail was hoisted. One suspects that the tired voyagers were too eager to finish the cruise that day and to work their way into harbour at Nain before darkness set in. At 4 p.m., near flood-tide, they were astonished to see bottom, for the sloop was in a large opening, more than a league from the nearest island, and in a track supposed to be safe. She was put about, but while still in stays struck on a submerged rock, later ascertained to be exposed at low water during spring tides. Having found that there was deep water astern the sailors got out the anchor, but their small boat was driven to leeward and it cost them half an hour of hard work before they brought her back within reach of a friendly rope and were hauled in. Their exertions were wasted: when the cable was carried to the windlass in an effort to warp the sloop off, the anchor "came home" without taking hold. By then the tide was on the ebb, and the sloop, standing high out of the water, was plainly immovable until the next flood-tide.

"The wind blew extremely violent—the sea round us was quite in a froth" and the waves were breaking right over the stranded vessel. The sailors, with the indiscipline which such an accident is liable to produce, clamoured to take to the boat while it was still possible to find their way ashore in the autumn twilight. The Brethren, whose composure impressed the crewmen, preferred risking the ship's breaking up under them to trusting to a boat in such a sea. The captain's views are not stated: probably he agreed with his men, but shrank from the responsibility of ordering clumsy and unskilled landsmen to attempt the dreadful leap from the sloop's deck into a rolling and tossing boat. So he had the latter provisioned and secured with three ropes, and awaited the event.

Late in the evening they felt the lift of the returning tide, and the sloop began to beat on the rock with a violence which threatened speedy destruction. At 10 o'clock her rudder was torn away. A sailor cried out that she was making water and implored the Brethren to quit the ship—but they still preferred to wait for daylight. They felt some apprehension that the crew would take to the boat and desert them—conduct for which their own stubbornness and the captain's want of decision would have afforded some excuse—"but they were brave honest sailors who did not attempt it".

At 2 a.m. the chests in the cabin were afloat, and the entire company mounted to what Christian Lister (who appears to have been the narrator throughout), or his editor Mr Hutton, designates as the "Quarter Deck" of the 25-ton sloop. There, in utter darkness and surrounded by the "dismal washing" of the sea, the Brethren resigned their scruples and consented to quit the ship. This was no easy matter for landsmen in the blackness of the night: the boat could not be brought close in for fear of staving her on the ship's side. Eventually she was worked round to the bow; blankets were thrown in to cushion the fall, and one by one the castaways climbed out on the anchor stock and jumped. It was found that of the three ropes by which the boat had been secured two had parted and two strands of the third worn through by chafing.

Two men were set to work bailing, and the boat was left to drive before the wind. Three islands were passed in succession, the surf breaking violently on their windward sides, and no sheltering cove to be seen. Apparently the boat, overmanned and driving fast with wind and tide, was not manageable enough to be hauled up in an island's lee. Calm water appeared ahead between two islets. Aiming for this they drove into a stretch where the surf was boiling furiously over sunken rocks. The boat was nearly swamped in an attempt to go about. A rock was looming up to leeward, and in despair the captain resolved to run her aground. Twenty yards from shore she struck hard, dashing all the men from their seats and filling with water. The captain, John Hill, and two seamen swam ashore and bracing themselves on the sloping face of the rock offered help to their comrades with an extended oar. Christian Lister was knocked on the head when the boat struck, and sank two or three times, but finally grasped the oar and was hauled to land. Jens Haven, thrown out of the boat at the first shock and thrown in again as she drove inshore, swallowed much water, but catching sight of his comrades he flung himself towards them and laid hold of the oar. Seeing that he was too exhausted to stand the pull the Eskimo Auluk dashed into the water and seizing him by the ankles swung him on to land.

The two other Moravians were not so lucky. Brother Brasen was swept three times to the rock and sucked back into the depths; twice he grasped the proffered oar, but weak, weighted down with clothes and perhaps stunned, he was powerless to help himself; his hands slipped from the oar and he sank for the last time. He had been in poor health throughout the cruise. Gottfried Lehman perished also. When the boat struck he was heard to commend his soul to God with a loud ejaculation, "& no one saw him after".

Though the first act of the rescued men was to offer thanks to Divine Providence for sparing all but two of their number, they could not, upon a sober appraisal of their situation, repress the rebellious thought that perhaps Heaven had dealt more kindly with the dead than

with those who lived. Their boat was wrecked and sunk, leaving them without provisions and helplessly marooned; there was no hope of encountering an Eskimo boat in those waters so late in the season. Present discomforts were cruel: it was almost impossible for half-drowned men to move on that steep and slippery rock; yet move they must unless, devoid of food and shelter, they were to perish of cold. Dizzy from the thump on his head, Christian Lister had not the strength to stand upright in the driving wind, and crawled around on all fours to keep up bodily warmth and circulation.

At the first glimpse of daylight they descended to the foot of the rock and gathered from the seaweed fragments of the boat, biscuit (in a watertight bag, it would seem) and blankets. Then the ebbing tide uncovered the remains of "our two dear brothers". "We stood together and wept like children, looking upon their lot as much happier than ours;—they were at the end of all their need and had brethren round them to inter their bodies" —while the less fortunate survivors awaited "the sharpest pangs of hunger" and death, leaving their bodies a prey to birds and beasts.

The tide was still on the ebb, and towards 7 a.m. they perceived the stem of the boat emerging from the sea. The joy aroused by this spectacle was quickly dampened; on drawing her up the castaways found all the boards of her bottom wrenched away from the keel, and her ribs broken and splintered. Stem, stern, and keel were intact, and this they attributed to two heavy "grablings" which had held the boat down and kept her from pounding on the rocks.

Some temporary comfort was afforded by the discovery of an old tin pot which had been used for bailing out the boat. A sailor had brought ashore tinder and matches in a "close" bag, and the captain two cakes of chocolate. A driftwood fire was kindled and a hot drink served to all hands.

Their drooping spirits were further restored by a taste of fresh meat. The ship's dog, which had been eyed in a sinister manner by the shipwrecked men as offering what an American seaman in a similar predicament was to call "meat on the hoof", was observed barking and clawing among the rocks—he had detected two young pigeons cowering in a recess. These were promptly skinned, boiled, and shared by the company.

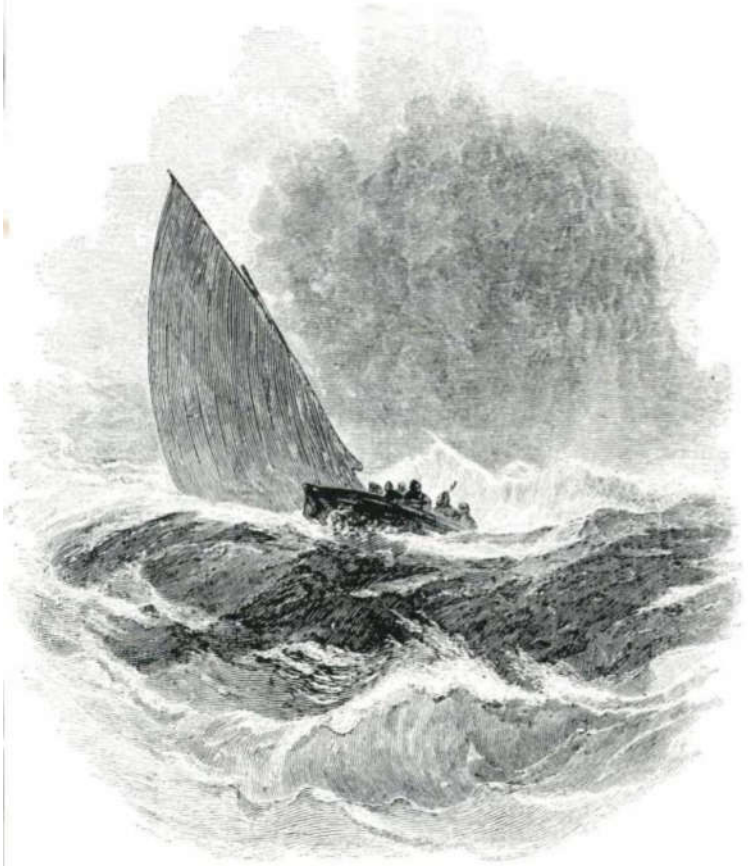
The night before, when on the point of quitting the ship, a sailor had observed a canvas bag lying on the deck and had tossed it into the boat without pausing to examine it. Its contents, twelve pairs of yarn stockings, fishing lines, and coarse sewing thread, at first a sad disappointment to the hungry men, later proved so emphatically to be the means of their deliverance that Christian Lister not unreasonably attributed the chance which had preserved them to the direct intervention of Heaven. The stockings were immediately useful; being barely damp they gave a soothing feeling to the limbs which communicated itself to the whole system of the wearer. As the weather was too foul to admit of work in the open they made a tent out of the blankets and there passed the rest of the day and the ensuing sleepless night.

On the morning of the 16th the Eskimo Auluk killed two more pigeons, thus obtaining a second reprieve for the dog, who had been in more imminent peril than his masters and, had he but known it, was even more indebted than they to the protection of Heaven. Refreshed by this second windfall the castaways turned their attention to the repair of the boat.

They had no tools. So they snapped in two the iron handle of the pot and whetted the broken ends on a rock to fashion a pair of gimlets. With these crude instruments and by exertions which must have put a frightful strain on wrists and on patience they bored holes in the shattered and gaping planks of the boat, drew them together and lashed them in place with fishing line, stopping the leaks as best they could with pieces of wood. Next they sewed blankets round the bottom of the boat and over these drew sealskins stitched together and fastened to the sides of the boat above the waterline. A piece of fat pork which had been washed ashore was used to grease the seams and make them more nearly water tight. The boat was then lashed together, fore and aft, with two ropes. This must have recalled to the minds of the Brethren the "undergirding" of the ship which bore the Apostle Paul to Malta, and have been welcomed as an omen of deliverance. Lastly, to protect the sealskin floor on which their lives depended they laid "spars" (slats) across the bottom of the boat, leaving two spaces, one fore and one aft, to allow free play for the bailing buckets.

When these repairs were sufficiently advanced to give reasonable assurance of their effectiveness, these simple-minded but truly valiant men suspended work on the boat and laboriously gathered stones to build a vault where they laid the bodies of the dead for protection until they could be taken away for burial. Brother John Hill who, though attached to the ship not the Mission, seems to have held a sort of primacy among the surviving Brethren, gave a short discourse and recited verses which moved even the captain and sailors to tears: "we were thankful in having such orderly people near us".

The 17th was spent in completing repairs to the boat and in giving her a trial run which proved that with



constant bailing she could be kept afloat. On the morning of September 18th, having chosen as their watchword the text, "He hath made His wonderful works to be remembered: the Lord is gracious and full of compassion" (Ps. 111, 4), they launched out and steered away to the south.

Seaward the sight of the wrecked sloop still fast on the reef stirred regrets for lost baggage and seamen's kits, but they dared not venture outside the islands into the ocean swell. They did not steer a direct course but sailed by legs from island to island to keep as close as possible to land. The weather was calm and the breeze fair; as they altered course from time to time "the wind sensibly [perceptibly] changed several times in our favour"—by direct intervention of Providence, thought Lister—or perhaps as the natural consequence of a moderate breeze blowing among islets down a rugged and irregular shoreline. In any case it was a boon to the travellers, for they had only two oars, and the boat could not have held together sailing on a tack.

By 4 p.m. they had travelled thirty miles and found themselves off Rhodes Island, which, stretching across the mouth of a great bay, formed the harbour of Nain. Here they put ashore, fearing the conflicting tides which met inside the island, and the strong breeze known to blow across the bay at nightfall. After the perils they had surmounted they were taking no avoidable risks on the verge of safety. They kindled a huge fire, confident that it would be seen at Nain and bring them rescue in the morning. But luckily the crew of an Eskimo shallop observed their signal and taking them aboard filled them with seal meat and blubber and at 7 p.m., set them ashore at Nain.

"Our greatest concern," the narrative continues, "was upon Sister Brasen's account, how she in her circumstances, being big with child, might be affected by the account of her husband's decease. She learnt it by degrees from bro' Haven, but was prepared for it by having seen in a dream, at the very time of her husband's departure (death) Her Husband stand before her pale as a corpse, looking cold and with the appearance of blood from a wound on the side of his nose (just as we found him when his Corpse drove on shore) she, as a faithful handmaid of Christ, resigned herself to his will, for whose sake and cause she had married and come to Labrador."

On the following day the crew hired the Eskimo shallop and, accompanied by six Brethren in a second boat, set out to save what they could from the wreck of the sloop and bring in the bodies of Brasen and Lehman. The native sorcerer Segulliack, though not on the most cordial terms with the missionaries, yielded to the kindly feelings which a neighbour's misfortune seldom fails to evoke, and joined with his boat to aid in the work of salvage. The bodies of the dead were recovered and on the 25th of September were solemnly laid to rest in the Mission cemetery.

Such was the narrative read and filed away by the Earl of Dartmouth in the year of Lexington and Bunker's Hill.

* * *

The Moravians did not permit this disaster to deter them from the work of discovery. In 1811 two of the Brethren in an Eskimo shallop reached Cape Chidley, entered Ungava Bay and sailed some distance up the Koksoak River past the site of Fort Chimo nearly twenty years ahead of the Hudson's Bay traders by whom the post was set up. *The Beaver* for September 1947 carries an account of their trip. ◆

ARCTIC FURS

PRIME OR WORTHLESS?

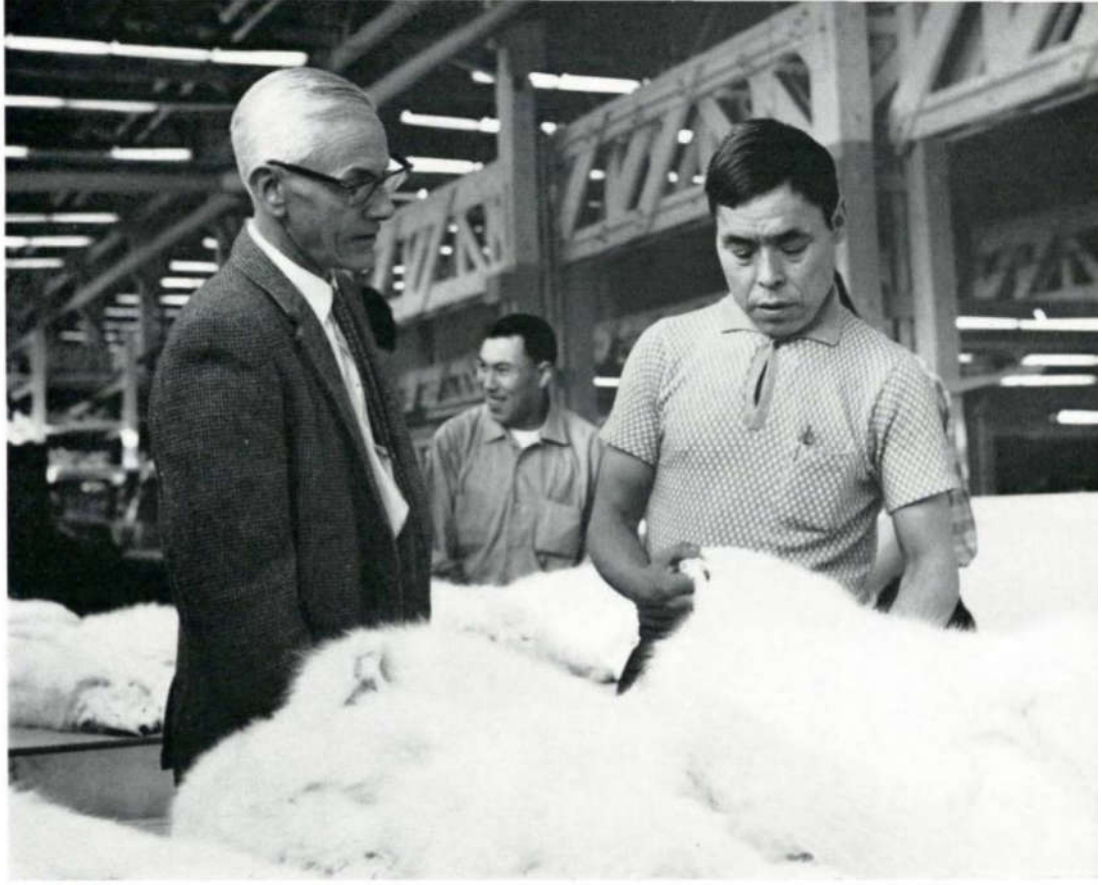
By Helen Burgess

GEORGE HUNTER FOR H B C

FOR MOST of his forty-four years, Eskimo hunter Appaliapik from Grise Fiord on Ellesmere Island has lived with—and by—the first phase of the arctic fur industry. At five, he shot his first caribou from a rifle steadied across the back of his kneeling father; at ten, he brought home his first polar bear to be skinned. He knows all there is to know about surprising a seal at its breathing hole or baiting traps for the fastidious white arctic fox.

Until this spring, Appaliapik's knowledge of the fur trade ended when he loaded bales of local furs aboard the first plane headed south. As president of the remote fur-buying Eskimo co-operative, he had paid local trappers a flat rate for pelts. When the cheque came in from their sale at the Montreal fur auction, it too often meant a loss to the co-operative. Appaliapik did not understand enough about the complicated process of fur grading and marketing to understand why.

Late in 1965, when the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources asked Eskimo co-operatives in the Eastern Arctic to send a delegate to a fur-grading course in Churchill, Manitoba, the members chose Appaliapik. He was picked up by a DC-3 in mid-February, as soon as the sun was high enough in the sky to make a landing at Grise Fiord possible. The plane circled to pick up trappers in nine other settlements and flew south to Fort Churchill on the west coast of Hudson Bay. There the group settled down in one corner of a vacated



Appaliapik from Grise Fiord receives instruction from Andrew Stewart in white fox grading.

HELEN BURGESS

military hangar with instructor Andrew Stewart and $7,000 in furs on loan from the Hudson's Bay Company. Andrew Stewart, now Chief, Fur Section, Department of Agriculture has thirty years of experience in the fur industry—most of them gained as a grader and buyer with the Hudson's Bay Company in the Mackenzie District and at fur auctions in Montreal.

Appaliapik, who speaks no English, worked through an interpreter. He was impatient to get directly to the business of pricing.

"Just tell me what to pay," was the gist of his comments at the first fur-grading session. After several days with 350 pelts that ranged from luxurious to worthless, the relation of price to grade became clear. Grades were a constant standard; prices fluctuated with fashion trends and the law of supply and demand.

White fox pelts (which at fur auctions sell in over thirty classifications) were initially confined to four basic grades: Firsts, with long glistening guard hairs and dense underfur; Best Seconds; Low Seconds, and Thirds. At the bottom of the list were flat blueish skins (trapped before prime) and ragged shedding skins (trapped after prime); both were practically worthless.

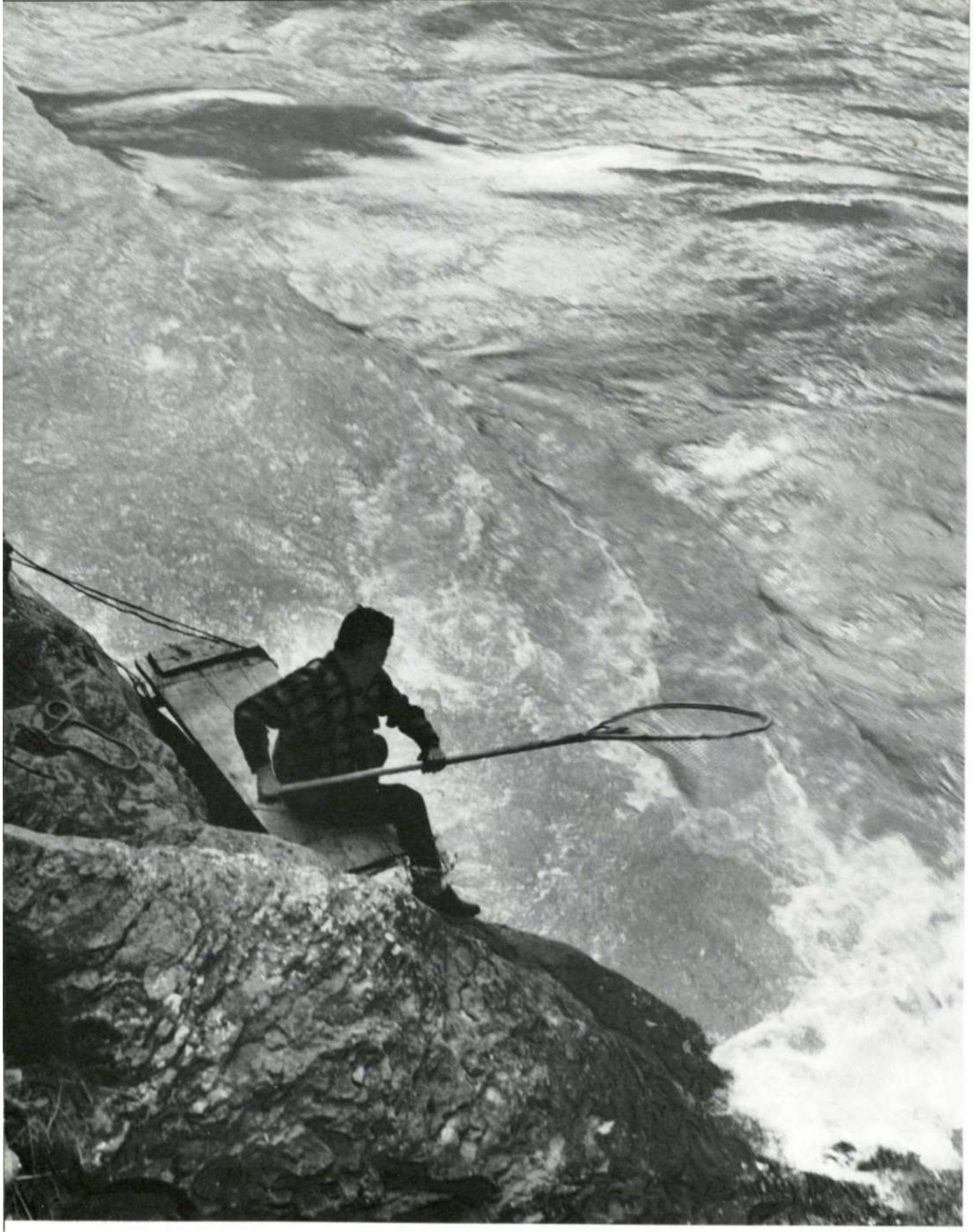
"The trainees were keen to learn all they could. Once they were given pelts to classify, no head was raised and no sound heard until the job was finished," said Mr Stewart. "They came to the course with no technical knowledge of fur grading—but with a sound appreciation of the merits of a good pelt."

In the second week of the course, 'stained' pelts were classified. Yellowish stains caused mainly by feeding habits (a ravenous fox burrowing into a rich fat seal) downgrade the skin to a lower level. Badly stained or greasy pelts, trainees were warned, could damage an entire lot when baled with clean furs. Several hours were spent discussing the handling and cleaning of seal skins: thirty hair-seal skins were loaned to the school by the Issatik Eskimo Co-operative at Whale Cove.

Co-operative information courses with Instructor Aleksandrs Sprudzs of the Department of Northern Affairs alternated with the fur-grading sessions. Text books on both subjects were prepared in Eskimo syllabics. Similar classes had been held for seventeen trainees at Yellowknife in November.

The course at Churchill was timed to take Appaliapik and his new-gained knowledge back to his home settlement in time to grade the season's catch of white foxes. Improved handling and grading (with a more accurate assessment of the value of the raw skins) are expected to give a substantial boost to the incomes of Eskimo trappers.

In recent years the annual value of furs produced in the Canadian Arctic—mainly white fox—has averaged over $600,000. ◆



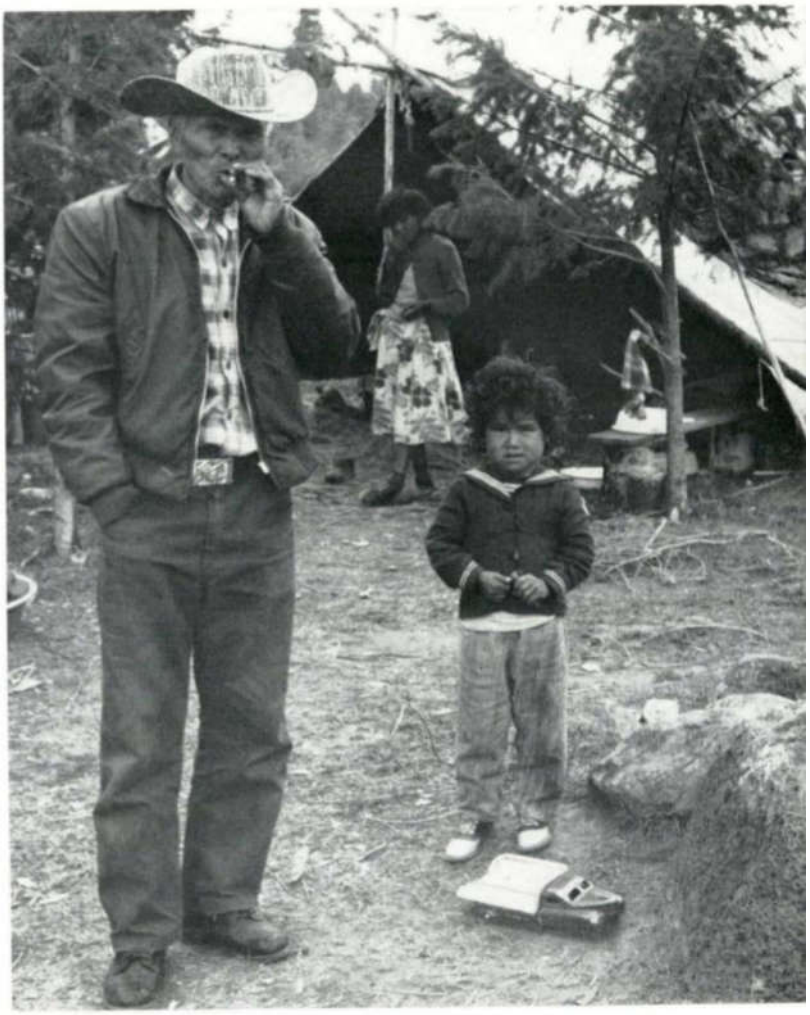
CHILKO FISHING CAMP

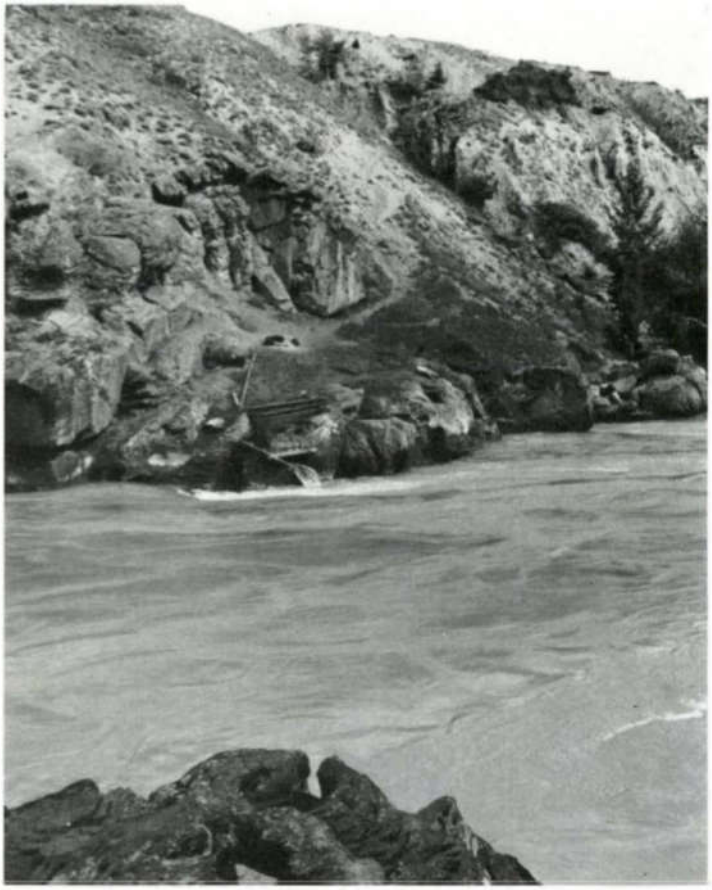
Photos by H. D. von Tiesenhausen

In the latter part of August hundreds of thousands of sockeye salmon which have travelled from the sea, 300 miles away, up the Fraser River and on up the Chilcotin reach their spawning grounds in the Chilko River. Two years ago when the fish were starting to move up the Chilcotin a third of a mile of river bank crashed down, forming a wall seventy feet high across the river, damming a lake three miles long. When finally the water flowed over the wall the river cut through the earth to create a new channel and through this silty water the salmon made their way, to reach the Chilko slightly later than usual.

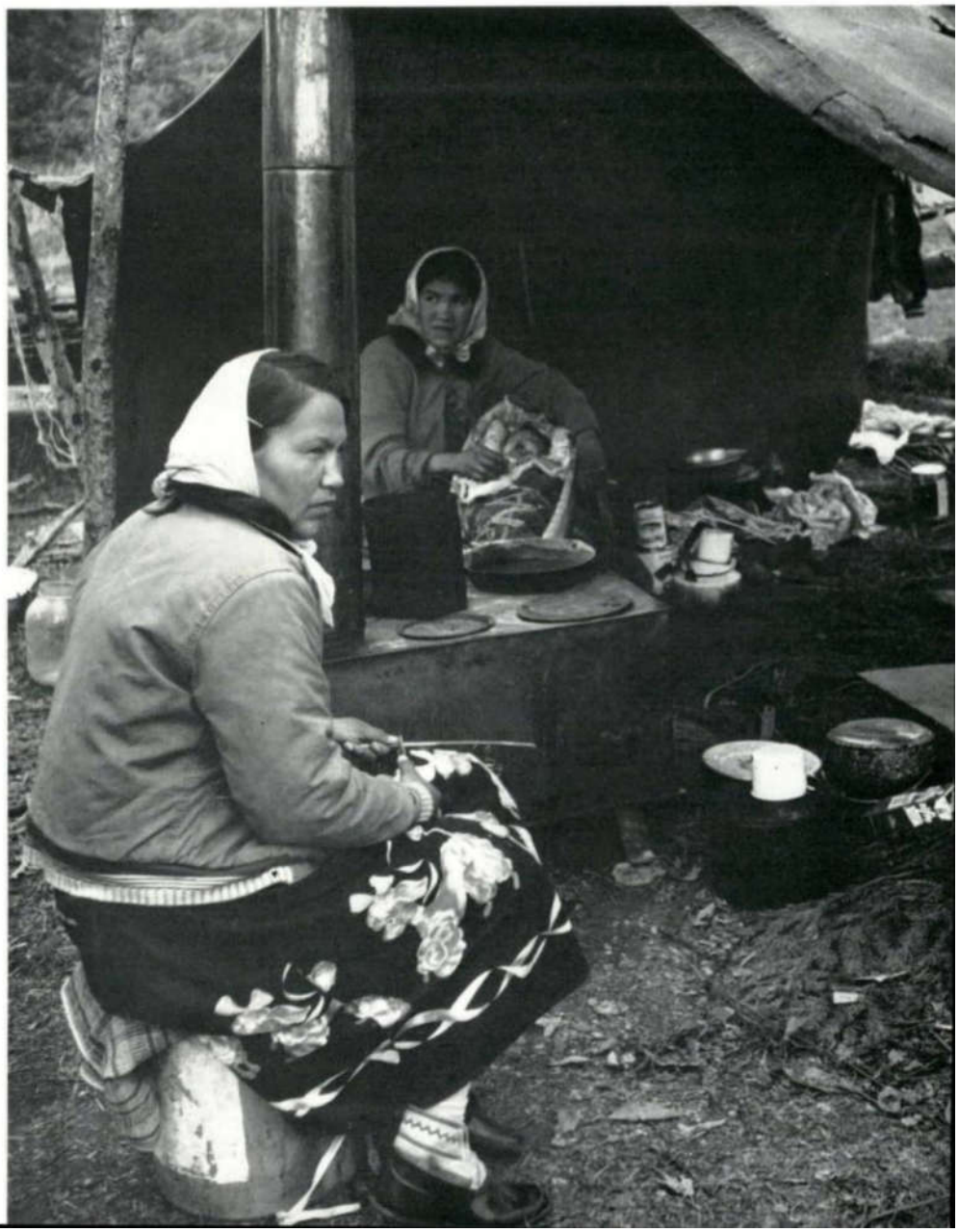
Here from early times the Chilcotin tribe of the Athapascan people came to fish. Sometimes they used weirs and sometimes basket traps, but where the rivers were too big for weirs and too swift for traps they speared and netted the fish. Dip-nets were usually woven from nettle fibre and they might be small bags hung from a forked stick or large nets attached by rings to a hoop up to eight feet in diameter. When the fur traders penetrated to interior British Columbia they, like the Indians, came to depend upon dried salmon as their staple food, and more than a hundred years ago the Chilcotin were catching salmon for the Hudson's Bay Company. That their methods have not changed much is shown by the Indian on the dangling wooden platform with his dip-net poised above the swirling Chilko.

The scenes on these pages are at a Chilcotin summer fishing camp on the Chilko a few miles above its confluence with the Chilcotin River.

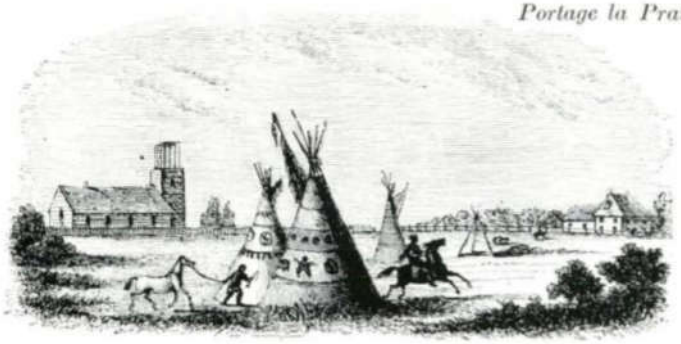




The summer fishing camp is set up on a bank above the Chilko River and here the group lives while they catch and cure the salmon. While the men fish from precarious platforms over the swift flowing river, the women look after the camp and dry the fish. In the old manner, fish after cleaning and heading were hung in the sun for a few days, then the backbones were removed and the fish, spread open with splints of wood, hung in sheds where sun, air, and smoke completed the curing. In the picture below one woman is trimming sticks for fish-drying while the mother in the background tends the baby laced into its basket cradle.



Portage la Prairie in 1857.



EARLY TRAILS TO CARLTON HOUSE

BY J. F. KLAUS

OF THE MANY TRAILS developed by the Hudson's Bay Company the Carlton or Saskatchewan trail was without doubt one of the most important. It was the link that connected east and west through Red River in the heart of the continent (in what is now Manitoba).

The concept of a transcontinental communication line originated with the North West Company. Daniel Harmon mentions in his journal, written at Fort Alexandria on the upper Assiniboine River in 1801, that a dogteam express of that company usually left Athabasca in December to pass through the wintry Northwest until it finally reached Sault Ste Marie at the end of March. This service was in fact inaugurated in 1798 when the first express left Fort Chipewyan on October 1st and arrived 229 days later at Sault Ste Marie.

The original route used by the Hudson's Bay Company between Carlton House and Red River came into being with the amalgamation of the companies in 1821 and the subsequent establishment of Fort Pelly as headquarters of the Swan River District in 1824. The eastern part of the trail between Fort Pelly and Fort Garry was even then well known; it offered the choice of taking the old winter road of the fur traders along Swan River, Lake Winnipegosis and Lake Manitoba, then southeast to Red River, or of following the Assiniboine River all the way to the same destination.

Even the western section of the trail lying between Fort Pelly and Carlton House was relatively familiar as far west as the Quill Lakes. Since 1795 fur traders based at the posts on the upper Assiniboine River had roamed far and wide as far west as the Touchwood Hills, the Quill Lakes and occasionally probably far beyond them. Between here and Carlton House, however, there were no continuous waterways to guide the traveller across the lonely countryside to the Saskatchewan River. Besides, it was a no-man's-land located between the territories of the friendly Crees and Saulteaux and their hereditary enemies, the Blackfoot and their allies. In 1794 an attack on South Branch House by a war party of 100 Gros Ventres had resulted in the destruction of the fort and the murder of three servants and their families.

Consequently, when Governor Simpson established the course of the future Carlton trail while on the return trip of his classic journey to the Columbia District in 1824-25, his intention of travelling across country more than 550 miles from Carlton to Fort Garry was considered "a plan the boldness of which induced the people to believe my

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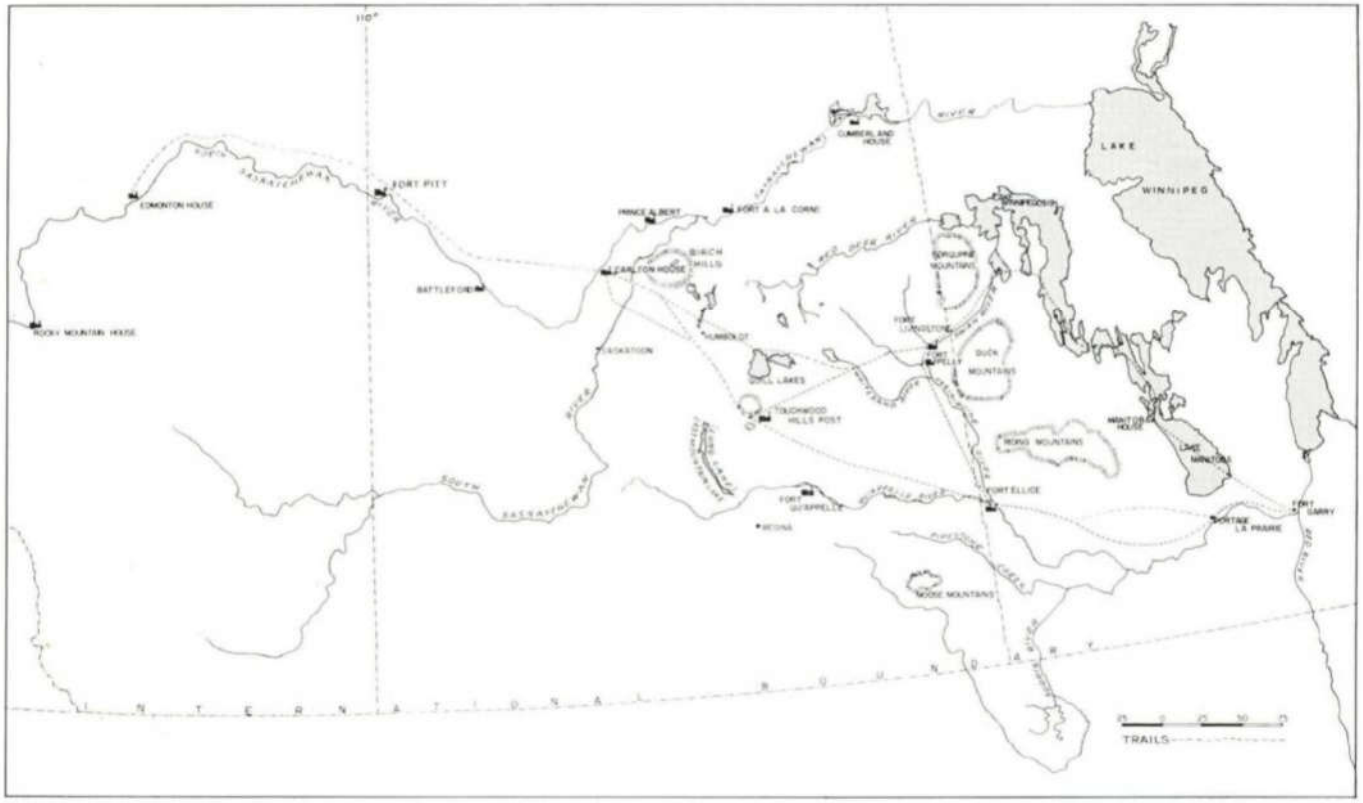
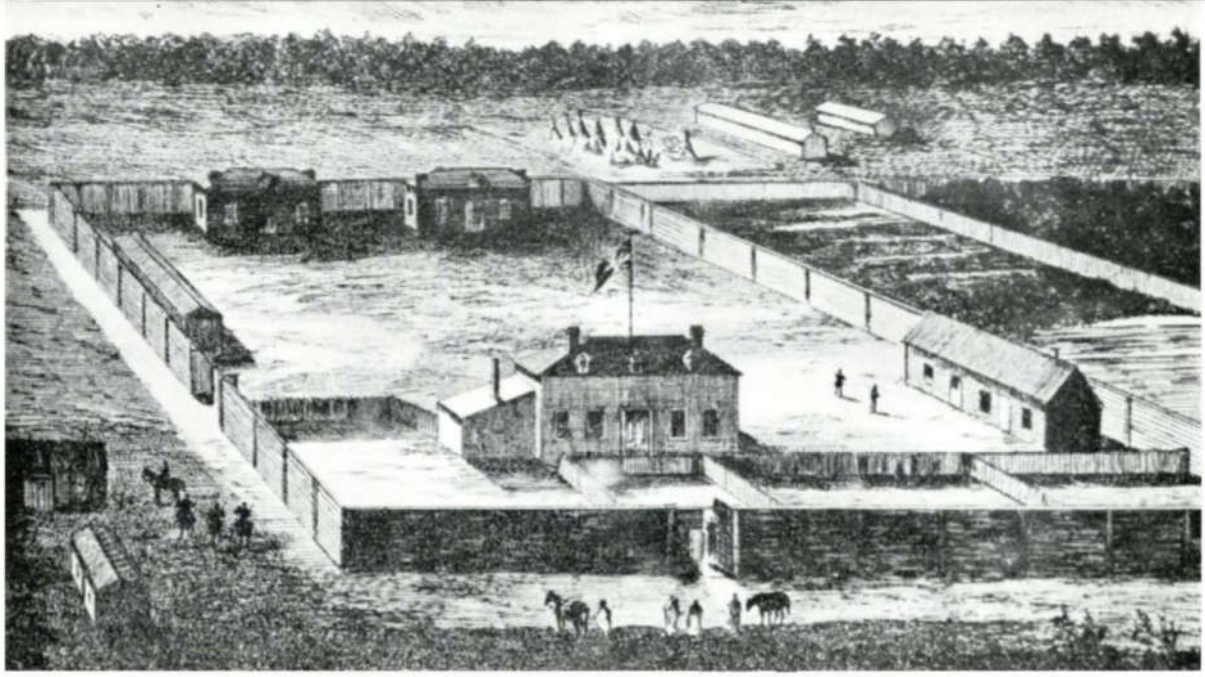


BASED ON A MAP PREPARED BY THE HISTORIC SITES DIVISION OF THE SASKATCHEWAN GOVERNMENT.

senses had taken leave of me". Leading "through plains infested by the Most Warlike and hostile Tribes in North America", Simpson asserted that "never was such a Voyage considering all the circumstances thereof undertaken in the Indian Country". Even Simpson's guide had travelled the proposed route between Carlton and the Assiniboine River only twice, the last time eleven years earlier. In addition an exceptionally high water level during the spring of 1825 added considerably to the difficulties of the journey.

Nevertheless, even a rumour that hostile Indians had laid an ambush for his party failed to impress the far from timid governor. Accompanied by Chief Trader James McMillan and eight employees of the Company, Simpson set out in the afternoon of 12 May, crossed the South Saskatchewan River and the Birch Hills the following day, then continued on a southeasterly course which took them to the border of the Buffalo Plains northwest of present-day Humboldt. Keeping to the thickets along the fringe of the prairies, Simpson's servant Tom Taylor and his companion George Bird were lost on 15 May while hunting and could not be found in spite of strenuous efforts. The party finally proceeded without them on the assumption that they would eventually find their way to one of the Company's posts "unless they fall in with hostile Indians in which case they will loose their scalps as a matter of course . . .".

During the morning of 16 May Simpson left the parkland for the open prairies. Fortunately, when he was about to turn back to Carlton House "fearing we might get bewildered in the Sea of plains we this Morn[g] entered upon", his guide came within sight of the Quill Lakes. Being now in more familiar country, Simpson's party followed the north shore of the Quill Lakes, "having the Touch Wood Hills in sight on the other side", then proceeded along the south side of Fishing Lake and the Whitesand River to a crossing place at Dog Knoll (Butte aux Chiens), about seven miles south of present Invermay. The area of the Assiniboine River was reached on 18 May without further difficulties except those presented by the flooded countryside. Simpson did not take the time to visit the newly established Fort Pelly only 16 miles away on the opposite banks of the swollen Assiniboine as "none of our people know the exact spot", but struck out southeasterly along the Whitesand and Assiniboine rivers until he reached the junction of the Assiniboine and Qu'Appelle rivers on the 22nd. Here, near the future site of Fort Ellice, by swimming back



Fort Pelly, from a sketch by Martineau published in "Canadian Illustrated News" in 1876.

and forth he effected a crossing of both streams under conditions which elicited his remark that "never was an unfortunate Gov^{r} in such a Woeful plight as that of the North^{n} Depm^{t} of Ruperts Land this Day". In spite of all difficulties, the hardy governor travelled at the rate of 35 miles a day, arriving at Fort Garry on 28 May.

His lost companions found their way to Fort Pelly in a rather dramatic fashion. On the point of death by exposure and exhaustion after two weeks of aimless wandering, Tom Taylor and George Bird eventually discovered the tracks made by Simpson's party. These they followed until Taylor suddenly found himself in surrounding familiar in his childhood days at one of the Assiniboine posts. He and Bird finally reached Fort Pelly, then in charge of Chief Trader Allan McDonell, in a state of utter exhaustion, "standing before him with their torn and emaciated limbs, while their haggard cheeks and glaring eyes gave them the appearance of maniacs."

This remained the course of the overland route between Fort Garry and Carlton House for the following 27 years. Simpson himself travelled the trail again in 1829 with an imposing entourage including a piper and a standard bearer on the return from his overland trip to the west coast. Always an impatient traveller, he covered the distance from Fort Vancouver on the Columbia River to Fort Garry in 66 days by way of Nez Percés, Okanagan and Fort Colvile, over the Athabasca Pass to Fort Assiniboine, then by horse to Fort Edmonton, by boat to Carlton House, by horse again over the same trail as before, this time going to Fort Pelly, and finally by canoe down the Assiniboine River to Fort Garry.

Still more impressive was Sir George's last trip over the Carlton trail in 1841 while on his celebrated journey round the world. He set an all-time record on this occasion by covering the more than 550 miles between Fort Garry and Carlton House in thirteen days by means of relays of horses and a short cut between Fort Ellice and Carlton House: ". . . in order to save us a day, or perhaps more, in calling at Fort Pelly for a relay of horses, we despatched three men, about a week before our own start, to have the requisite band of nags brought for us from that establishment to a conspicuous landmark in the sea of plains, known as the *Butte aux Chiens*." This was the crossing place of the Whitesand River known to Simpson from his previous voyages in 1825 and 1829. From here the cavalcade, consisting now of nineteen persons, fifty horses and six carts, proceeded to the Quill Lakes, "having waters as briny as those of the Atlantic," then to Fort Carlton where to Simpson's dismay ". . . we found every soul in the establishment enjoying a siesta with open gates."

Simpson's courageous example in 1825 demonstrated the feasibility of an overland route while the growing importance of Red River as an administrative centre made it increasingly desirable as a means of swifter travel and communication, and later of freighting as well. Within a decade of Simpson's first adventurous journey the trail across the prairies developed into an important link of a true transcontinental system. From the time the Council of the Northern Department authorized the institution of a winter express in 1832 "for the purpose of transmitting corrected accounts for the Depot of the summer transactions as well as of conveying information relative to the Districts in general" the General Winter Express, also referred to as the Northern Express, passed over the trails between Carlton House, Fort Pelly, Fort Ellice and Fort Garry with almost clocklike regularity during the month of February. In addition numerous

special express parties travelled the same path to an extent that by 1834 the route had developed into a familiar and clearly discernible trail. The Fort Pelly journal of that year was able to state about an employee that "although he had never been at Carlton, he reached there his eights day from this without once being in doubt as to the road." The following year the same journal confirmed that the Company's officers of remote districts were using the trail also: "Messrs Rowand, McIntosh and Purden arrived on their way to Red River from Saskatchewan, also Messrs Heron and Douglas from Columbia for the same place."

Its full scope as a transcontinental route was displayed in an interesting connection with Arctic discovery undertaken at that time by British naval expeditions as well as officers and men of the Hudson's Bay Company. In 1834, for example, a rescue party under Captain Back had taken up winter quarters at Great Slave Lake in readiness to launch a search for Captain John Ross who had disappeared into the Arctic with the *Victory* in 1829. When it became known in London that Ross had been rescued in the meantime by the *Isabella* it became urgent that the news be conveyed to Captain Back before his expedition got under way in the spring. The Hudson's Bay Company accordingly notified Back of the turn of events in two sets of letters which left Hudson's Bay House in London on 22 October 1833. One set was sent by way of Montreal, the other by American mail with instructions to all officers of the Company to forward both packets without delay. They then travelled by way of Sault Ste Marie, Michipicoten, Pic, Long Lake, Nipigon, Fort William, Rainy Lake, Red River, Fort Ellice, Fort Pelly, Carlton House, Ile à la Crosse and Fort Chipewyan to Fort Reliance where the first message reached Captain Back on 25 April 1834, followed by the duplicate on 7 May. This was, however, not a record journey for the Fort Pelly journal noted on 26 April 1836 that two men arrived with an express for Columbia which had left London in December of the preceding year.

Arctic discovery was also the purpose of Thomas Simpson who began his journey to the frozen north in a "gay cariole" at Red River on 1 December 1836. He chose the lake route, travelling along the ice of Lakes Manitoba and Winnipegosis past the Duck Mountains with their "rude and impassable heights", then crossed over to Swan Lake and followed the Swan River to Fort Pelly. From here he proceeded along the north bank of the Assiniboine River and the Quill Lakes to Carlton House and Fort Chipewyan for his rendezvous with Chief Factor Peter Warren Dease.

More dramatic was Chief Factor Dr John Rae's return from the Arctic in 1851. While searching for clues to the fate of the long missing Franklin Expedition Rae had found on the east coast of Victoria Island the remnants of a flagstaff and a stanchion with the markings of a British naval vessel. These he carried to England for more positive identification, travelling on snowshoes all the way from Athabasca to St Paul in Minnesota, a distance of 1730 statute miles according to his estimate, by way of Fort Chipewyan, Ile à la Crosse, Carlton, Pelly, Ellice and Red River.

Several factors made the establishment of new posts and new trails inevitable. The outcome of the Sayer trial at Red River in 1849 opened up a new era in the fur-trade of Rupert's Land in that from that date forth free traders entered into competition with the Hudson's Bay Company in the barter for furs freely and without constraint. On the other hand the Company had no intention of suffering this prospect of commercial opposition without appropriate countermeasures. These took the form of making the trade more attractive and convenient for their Indian customers by the establishment of additional trading posts in strategic locations. Consequently a Qu'Appelle Lakes Post was erected about 1850 at a point

Butte aux Chiens, "conspicuous landmark in the sea of plains".

Right: Indentations of the old trail winding down to the site of Carlton House (dark patch in field, upper right) on the bank of the North Saskatchewan.

J. F. KLAUS

between the second and third Fishing Lakes as an outpost of the Upper Red River District. This involved the freighting of outfits and returns from and to Fort Garry until the post was attached to the Swan River District with the trading season of 1855-56. Some 55 miles to the northwest the first Touchwood Hills Post began to operate in the winter of 1852-53 as an outpost of the Swan River District.

True to precedent the free traders penetrated to these isolated posts of the Company almost immediately and in considerable numbers, using old trails where possible and adding new ones when necessary. By 1851 the Swan River District had become ". . . the quarter from which the Red River smugglers derive the best portion of their furs," according to Eden Colvile, Governor of Rupert's Land. The same year Dr John Rae reported the officer in charge of Fort Ellice "up to his eyes in opposition" while in 1854, only two years after the establishment of the Touchwood Hills Post, Postmaster William McKay counted here some eighty carts belonging to Red River free-traders. At the Qu'Appelle Lakes Post they were reported to be "as thick as grasshoppers" on a later occasion.

While the free-traders based at Red River were naturally inclined to travel the shortest possible distance between their homes and the new posts, the Hudson's Bay Company did not adopt the new trails as a route to Carlton House immediately. Red River had not as yet achieved its future status as a distributing centre; the returns of Guard Post, Touchwood Hills Post, Fort Ellice and from 1856 Qu'Appelle Lakes Post were still being freighted to Fort Pelly and shipped from here to York Factory on Hudson Bay. The outfits brought in by the returning boat brigades were deposited at Fort Pelly for distribution to the various posts in the Swan River District.

Nevertheless, the establishment of the Touchwood Hills Post in 1852 influenced the course of the Carlton trail in that the Company now rerouted their winter express and general traffic to travel between Red River and the remote north and west by way of Fort Ellice or Lake Manitoba, Fort Pelly, Touchwood Hills Post and Carlton House although the old Quill Lakes trail remained in use as a short cut as well as for the purpose of accommodating the trade at Guard Post. The new trail left Carlton in a southeasterly direction and passed west instead of east of present-day Humboldt and the Quill Lakes to Touchwood Hills Post, a distance of 164 miles. In terms of modern maps, from the site of this post six miles north and two miles west of present Punnichy, the trail to Fort Pelly, 110 miles away, proceeded northeasterly, crossed No. 14 highway between Foam Lake and Tuffnell, then wound between Echo Lake and Silvery Lake to the crossing of the Whitesand River referred to by Simpson as the Butte aux Chiens. From here it turned east to cross No. 5 highway at Buchanan, No. 9 some six miles north of Canora and the Assiniboine River south of Hyas. This trail carried considerable traffic in outfits and returns and was also used by such notables as Captain Palliser, Lord Grosvenor, the Earl of Southesk (two gentlemen who made hunting trips in the fifties), Archbishop Taché and Governor Dallas until Fort Pelly ceased to be headquarters of the Swan River District in 1872. With outfit 1874 shipments via York Factory were discontinued altogether.

At this time the political development of western Canada brought about a brief but spectacular revival of the northern trail. British Columbia became a Canadian

The Duck Mountains which were passed on the Swan River route.

MANITOBA GOVERNMENT

ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Buffalo hunters camp on White Horse Plains between Fort Garry and Portage la Prairie, from a sketch by Armstrong.

province in 1871 mainly on condition that a transcontinental railway be built to connect east and west. The original survey of this line followed very closely the old trail of the Hudson's Bay Company from Fort Garry across the narrows of Lake Manitoba to the northern base of the Duck Mountains, then along the Swan River valley and on to Humboldt, Battleford, and Edmonton. This prospect of early telegraph and railway communication with east and west was a major factor in selecting a point ten miles north of Fort Pelly, named Fort Livingstone, as the headquarters of the newly formed North West Mounted Police in 1874 and two years later as the temporary seat of the first territorial goverment.

The construction of the new post by the Police was a project of considerable magnitude under conditions prevailing in 1874; 14,000 pounds of nails, 9,670 panes of glass for 615 windows, all the hardware required for sixteen buildings had to be hauled more than 330 miles over the old cart road between Red River and Fort Pelly, besides the supplies for the maintenance of men and animals. The first steam sawmill to be used in present Saskatchewan was brought over this trail to aid in the project of sawing more than a million feet of lumber, 550,000 shingles and 150,000 laths. It was estimated in 1875 that more than 3,000 carts passed over the trails. Even a stageline was then under consideration on the assumption that Forts Ellice, Pelly and Carlton were

Part of the well worn trail between Fort Pelly and the Swan River crossing which was in use in 1800. J. F. KLAUS

Touchwood Hills in the 1860s.

GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

Red River carts on the trail between Qu'Appelle Post and Fort Ellice in 1879.

GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

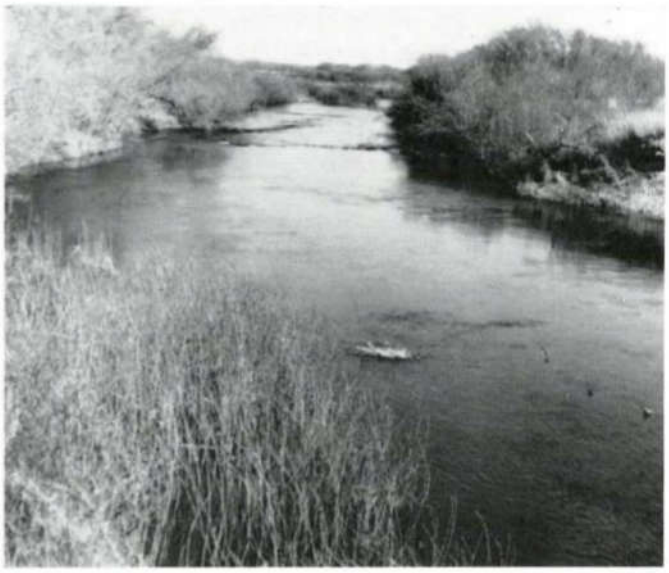
destined to develop into important centres. The first royal mail was carried along the lake route between Fort Garry and Fort Livingstone in the winter of 1874-5 by John Matheson and his dogteam and extended the following year to Edmonton.

This was probably the most colourful period in the history of this branch of the old Saskatchewan trails. Lieutenant-Governor Morris described it in picturesque terms in his opening address to the Indians assembled for the treaty negotiations at Carlton in 1876: ". . . standing here on this bright day with the sun above us, I cast my eyes to the East down to the great lakes and I see a broad road leading from there to the Red River, I see it stretching on to Ellice, I see it branching there, the one to Qu'Appelle and Cypress Hills, the other by Pelly to Carlton; it is a wide and plain trail. Anyone can see it. . . ."

So far as the Hudson's Bay Company was concerned, however, a shorter route to Carlton began to supersede the original trail from about 1860. The advent of American railway lines to the Mississippi, beginning with the Chicago and Galena Railroad in 1852, had opened up a new line of communication that proved swifter, cheaper and above all more dependable than the old York Factory route. The Company therefore adopted the Minnesota route after a successful trial in 1858 with the result that from 1861 Red River was in a position to supply a steadily increasing share of the outfits required for the Swan River and Saskatchewan Districts. This trend gained momentum after the Civil War until finally Red River superseded York Factory completely in 1875.

By 1865 the time-honoured system of carrying freight by York boats had become a problem which made the choice of carts a desirable alternative. Father Lacombe claimed to have employed the first cart brigade to carry freight over the direct route from Red River via Fort Ellice and Touchwood Hills to Carlton House in 1862 while in his opinion the Hudson's Bay Company did not start freighting over this trail until 1867. Actually it was a gradual process. The trail was used consistently by free-traders since the establishment of the Touchwood Hills Post in 1852. In 1854 a group of them wintered at

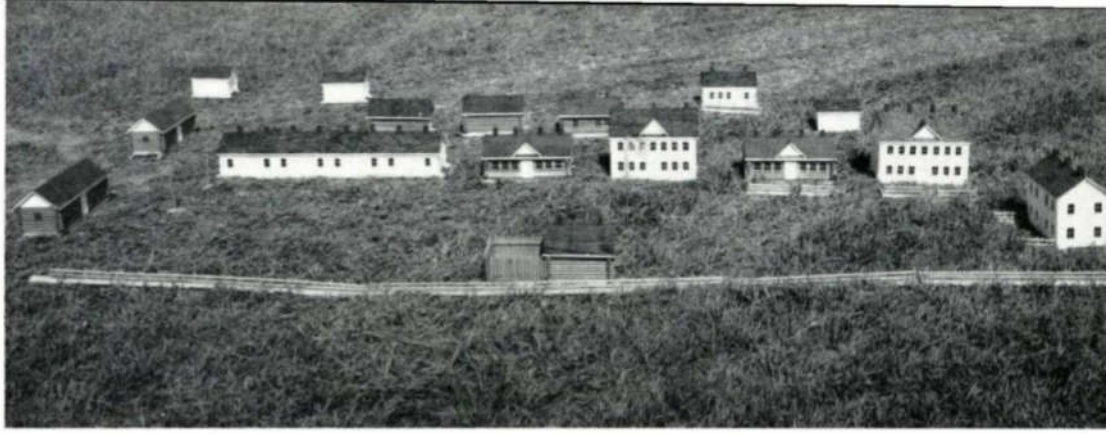
The Assiniboine about where Governor Simpson reached it in 1825, some sixteen miles below Fort Pelly.



Mount Carmel near Humboldt and three years later Palliser's party met them in the Carlton region. By 1860 such excursions were commonplace.

This seems to be the first year that freight of the Hudson's Bay Company was carried over that trail to Carlton. An entry in the Fort Ellice journal under 1 September 1860 states that "Mr. Hardisty and John Monkman and party arrived with 45 carts going to Carlton." They passed through Fort Ellice again on their return trip to Fort Garry on October 8. However, during this transition period the older trail also remained in use for some time to transport goods to the Saskatchewan District. The Fort Pelly journal reports under 30 January 1864 that horsedrawn sleds were being prepared "for the transport of goods for the Saskatchewan to the Touchwood Hills. These goods, 50 pieces, were to leave the Red River in 10 Horse Sleds for Fort Ellice about the 18th. Mr. McKay would then forward them on here and we to the Touchwood Hills whence the Carlton people will get theirs in the course of spring."

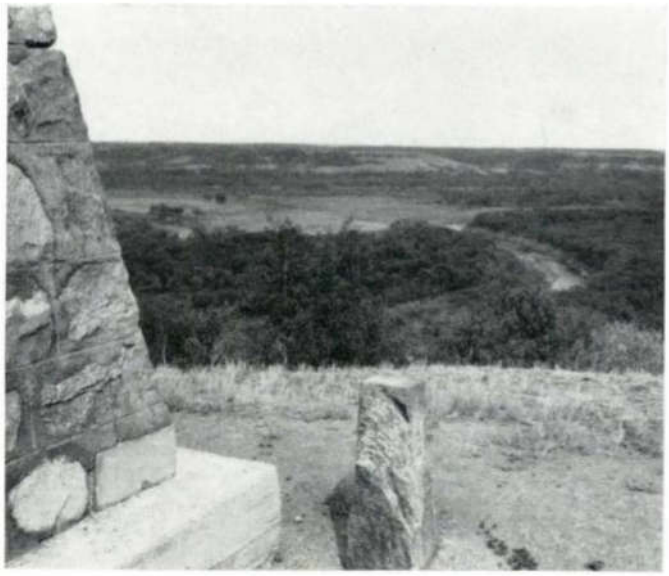
With the increasing flow of goods to and from Red River the advantages of the direct route to Carlton across



Model by E. Ericson of Fort Livingstone which was set up in 1874 by the Mounted Police.

J. F. KLAUS

Looking down on a loop in the Assiniboine from the marker on the site of Fort Ellice.



the Touchwood Hills became readily apparent. Its distance between Red River and Carlton House was some 540 miles compared with 560 by the Fort Pelly and Quill Lakes trail and 600 miles by the Fort Pelly and Touchwood Hills trail. Consequently large scale freighting by the Hudson's Bay Company began in 1866 over the shortest route when the Fort Ellice journal recorded under 28 July: "The Red River Carts arrived here yesterday evening more than a hundred in number, freighting up goods to Carlton." Another brigade followed ten days later, on 7 August: "Old Baptiste Normand arrived today with 60 Carts freighting up goods for Saskatchewan from Red River." Eventually 300 carts and 100 men were employed on this route as far as Carlton, making a round trip each season in 70 or 80 days. It became the best-known of all Carlton trails not only on account of the enormous amount of freight it carried but particularly because it played a conspicuous role in the beginning of government and settlement in western Canada. In 1879, three years before the arrival of the railway, 1,871 carts, 227 wagons and 35 buckboards, a total of 2,133 vehicles, passed the Shoal Lake Post of the North West Mounted Police (east of Fort Ellice) on their way west.

The Fort Qu'Appelle trail was used as a route to Carlton to a lesser extent. When in consequence of the rise of Red River Fort Ellice succeeded Fort Pelly as the headquarters of the Swan River District, the General Winter Express was re-routed to travel from Carlton to Red River via Touchwood Hills, Fort Qu'Appelle, Fort Ellice and Riding Mountain Post. This was also the route originally recommended by the North West Council in 1874 for the establishment of a royal mail service for the North West Territories.

Two factors combined to make long distance freighting by means of cart brigades obsolete. A new means of transportation had presented itself at Red River as early as 10 June 1859 with the *Anson Northup*, a "small, shabby, stern-wheel boat, mean and insignificant in itself, but important as the harbinger of new developments" as the Earl of Southesk saw it. Sixteen years later a surveyor, H. A. F. McLeod, reported: "The Hudson's Bay Company's steamboat (the *Northcote*) arrived at Edmonton on the 22nd July 1875. This was the first trip ever made by a steamer (as far as Edmonton) on the Saskatchewan from the Rapids [Grand Rapids at Lake Winnipeg]. It took 18 days and from Fort Garry 34 days, carrying 130 tons of freight." This was the equivalent of the weight carried by 325 carts.

Still more decisive was the advent of the railroad. It linked Winnipeg with the outer world in 1879 and stretched across the southern prairies in 1882-3. This date may be taken to mark the end of the Carlton trails as such, although north of this line large stretches of the formerly so busy road system survived for another quarter of a century. In this region the fur trade lingered on until here, too, railway and settlement completed the transition of the Canadian west from the old to the new in the early 1900s. Within a few years all but short sections of the old trails disappeared, followed by the trading posts they had served so well and so long. Carlton House was destroyed by fire in 1885, Fort Ellice was sold in 1889, Touchwood Hills Post was abandoned in 1910 and Fort Pelly in 1912. With them passed the era of canoes and York boats, dog trains and Red River carts. ◆

Carlton House Reconstruction

BY RUSS CLARKE

THIS SUMMER the reconstruction of Carlton House gets under way as a Saskatchewan jubilee and centennial project. Carlton was chosen for reconstruction because it figures prominently in historical development as a fur trade centre, as a meeting place for explorers, a base for buffalo hunters and supply depot for pemmican and dried meat, a North West Mounted Police post and as a troop depot during the Riel Rebellion. At least a dozen cross country trails converged there and it was a famous halfway stop on the long 1,000-mile trek from Fort Garry to Fort Edmonton. It was for a time the seat of council meetings of the Northern Department of the Hudson's Bay Company, and was a rendezvous for hunters and fur traders.

While mounted horsemen, wanderers on foot, and Red River carts travelled the prairie trails, riverboats, canoes, York boats, and then steam stern-wheelers plied the Saskatchewan River which became an important inland waterway; trails and waterway crossed at Carlton House.

In 1795 the Hudson's Bay Company established Carlton House on the Saskatchewan River below the forks. Its name was probably taken from the royal residence in England, Carlton House, as other forts of the period similarly honoured various royal residences. The location of the fort seems to have been changed several times, up river, then to the South Branch and finally, in 1810, to a level plain on the south bank of the North Saskatchewan near a spot called the Crossing Place or La Montée, which is some 45 miles north of present Saskatoon. Here it was continuously occupied until 1885, being rebuilt three times in this period. This is the fort that is being reconstructed.

The site was located by the late Professor A. S. Morton of the University of Saskatchewan who made extensive studies of the fur trade. (Later, the site of the buildings was confirmed by the use of mine detectors.) More than forty trading centres were known to have existed along the Saskatchewan River and Professor Morton noted that in some localities ruins of old establishments were to be found every few miles along the river. In many cases there is a ferry close to these ruins, sometimes using approaches that were early trails. The competitive Hudson's Bay and North West Companies were constantly moving posts in order to out-manoeuvre each other the better to intercept furs from the hinterland, and structures were short-lived because they were made of native green logs and timbers, perishable materials, and when dried out readily destroyed by fire.

The Saskatchewan valley generally is characterized by two benches, one some twenty feet above water level, the second twenty or more feet above the first. The higher bench, which in places extends as much as half a mile before meeting the valley wall, was an ideal site for a trading post, being above flood level yet close enough to

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Carlton House as it appeared in the 1860s is shown in the sketch on the opposite page, looking northwest from the Carlton Trail towards the North Saskatchewan River beyond the fort. The photo above shows the same view between 1882 and 1885; the factor's house has been built outside the former area of the stockade, which no longer stands.

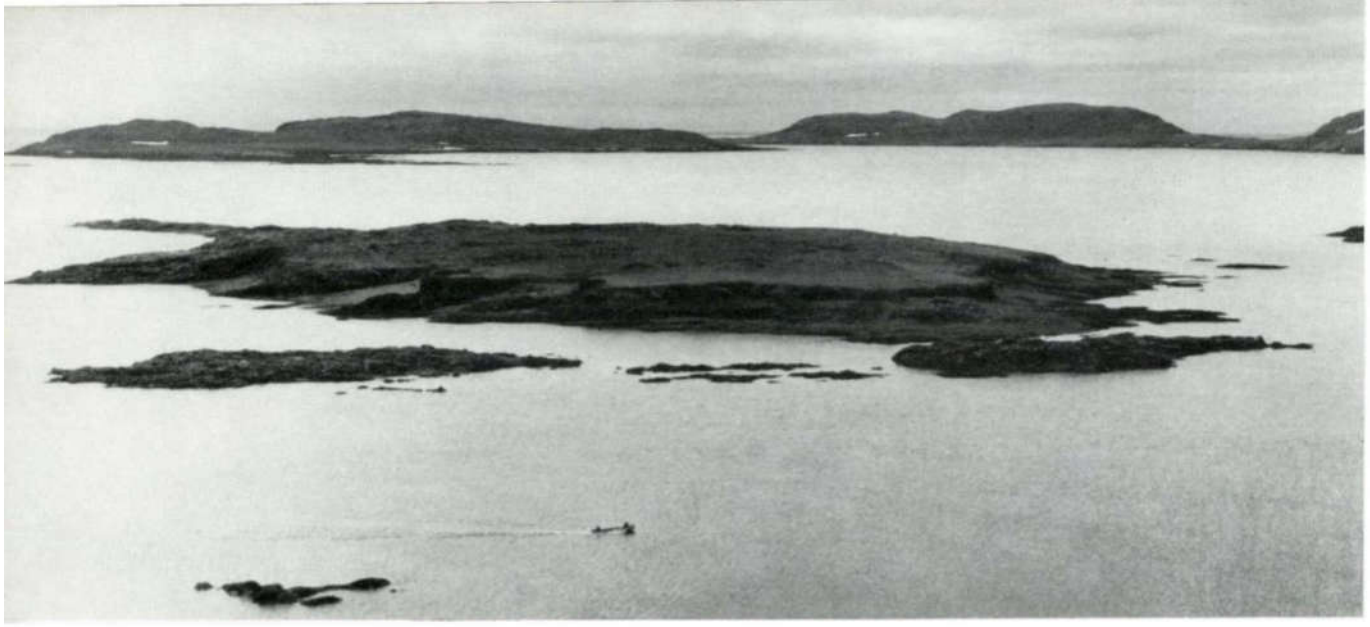
the river for movement of goods. Most posts were situated on the north bank of the river as a defence against Indian attack from the south; the Indians to the north had learnt to rely on the traders for supplies and were more tolerant of the Whites. Professor Morton found that most posts on the Saskatchewan were built on land that had not later been brought under cultivation. Where this was the case the outline of stockades and buildings could sometimes be traced. A shallow depression in the earth is the most common clue leading to the discovery of a fort site; at one time these were cellars, the largest usually under ice houses and used for storing buffalo meat.

The site of Carlton House is partially under cultivation and to the casual eye nothing was revealed. However, the ruts of the old trails are still visible and preliminary excavations made in 1964 established positions of bastions and dimensions of the palisade. Partial excavation of cellars has uncovered many artifacts related to the early days of the fur trade.

As part of Saskatchewan's participation in the 1967 Canadian Centennial celebration, the historic sites division of the Saskatchewan Department of Natural Resources plans to build a replica of the two-storey Hudson's Bay store and part of the stockade. Both will be erected on exact former locations. As nearly as possible the exterior will be authentically reproduced from available plans, drawings, photographs, descriptions, and pictures. Local logs, lumber, and construction material will be used. Part of the interior is to be a museum and interpretive centre. Pictures and inscriptions will tell the story of the fort and give historic highlights of the area, and the museum will display artifacts of the fur trade dug from ruins on the spot.

Research for the project has been carried out by the provincial archives, a member of the centennial corporation, and by A. J. Ranere, historic sites archaeologist. The project is under the direction of M. K. Baker, supervisor of the historic sites division of the department of Natural Resources.

Despite its early prominence, Carlton House, unlike Fort Garry and Fort Edmonton, was doomed to extinction. Its last occupants, besides a small Hudson's Bay Company staff, were the North West Mounted Police who moved in to the fort in the fall of 1884. The following March the fort was accidentally set on fire as the police prepared to fall back on Prince Albert following the Duck Lake battle of the Northwest Rebellion and a few days later the destruction was completed by the rebels. Need for the fort disappeared overnight. The railways, new trade centres, and settlement in the new West treated it ruthlessly. Suddenly it was gone and nearly forgotten. But the main buildings will be reconstructed and once again a Carlton House will stand at the meeting of the trails and the waterway. ◆



Kodlunarn Island in Countess of Warwick Sound.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY FRED BRUEMMER

QUEST IN THE HUNTER

by James Wemigwans

IN THE SUMMER OF 1963 a group of men at Frobisher Bay decided to visit the islands in Countess of Warwick Sound where in 1578 Sir Martin Frobisher had mined for gold. From Kodlunarn Island Frobisher's men had taken home two thousand tons of ore—only to find it was worthless. (The story of Canada's first gold rush is told in *The Beaver*, Summer 1964.) To the present group, what did not glitter was as good as gold—or would be after they had worked on it—for they were seeking the basic material to produce the pieces of sculpture so much in demand today.

The scarcity of soapstone in the immediate area made our proposed search necessary. Although the forebears of our expedition members had randomly mined this mineral to make into pots and seal oil lamps, never did they think to amass such a cumbersome material. Would they not pass this way again where the rock would always remain? Besides, they had been too busy with their ceaseless search for sustenance which lasted through the seasons of the long day and the long night.

Now the descendants of these northlanders laboured at the white man's job for a living, and they had come from many parts of this land. Our expedition consisted of nine members and with the exception of the writer, who is an Ojibwa Indian from southern Canada, all were Eskimos. There was Davidee, an ex-Port Harrisonite, a master carver of Frobisher with works in the National Gallery of Canada; and Charlie, also formerly of Port Harrison, an eminent carver, upon whom as our chief engineer we depended for the mechanized mobility of our vessel the *Hunter*, formerly the *Toogak* from the shipyards of Lake Harbour. There were Steve and Eddie Kikoak, two brothers from the Cambridge Bay area, who had made their way to Frobisher through the DEW line, being employed at various sites through the years, until the gathering place of many other Inuit became their migration terminus. And those long-time residents of the Island: Kootoo, Noah, Mike, and Takoonagak, who now lived a life far removed from that of their fathers—a life abrupt in change as summer is to winter. These were to be my companions on the expedition. I had been chosen to accompany this journey as log keeper and communications operator. It turned out that the communications equipment had long ago been damaged by sea water in other journeys that summer.

Despite the fact that there had been some contention as to the genuineness of Eskimo sculpture produced in Frobisher Bay because of the use of soapstone not locally produced, it was the firm thinking that a piece of stone was the same as any other piece of stone; only when the carver released the form within did it become sculpture. Our search for this stone, however, was not because of this contention; the motive was purely self-reliance.

After a week's delay for engine parts, final outfitting of our vessel, a thirty-six foot sloop, was completed on the evening of September 18th. Several drums of gasoline

James Wemigwans, who is a government employee at Frobisher Bay where he has resided, with his Eskimo wife, since 1961 left reservation life on Manitoulin Island to travel. Besides his native Ojibwa and English, he speaks Cree, some Eskimo and some French. He is keenly interested in the history of arctic exploration.

and other types of fuel were stowed by using the government dock for offloading supply ships. The tide, having reached its high mark at eleven p.m., our vessel weighed anchor in the dark and stealthily slipped through the dark night as though on a rum-running mission at some secret port. In the dim glare of truck headlights, cumbersome drums were hoisted aboard and lashed down in the hold. Then our heavily laden craft slipped back to its mooring to be ready for boarding at first light of dawn.

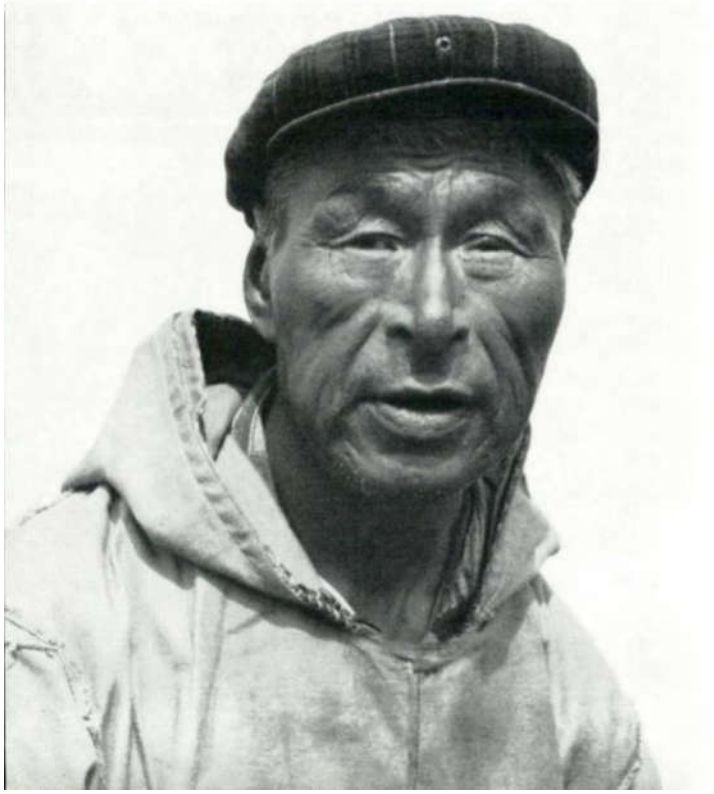
At ten the following morning anchor was weighed, it requiring six or seven men to manhaul a one-hundred-pound anchor and one hundred and fifty feet of chain. Our departure was marked by gusty snow squalls and a temperature two degrees below freezing point. Ice had begun to form on the rocky shoreline and the days had turned much colder but the prospects of an exciting journey produced an inward warmth. A salute and farewell, of two air horn blasts, was given the ice-breaker supply ship, *John A. MacDonald* as McLaren Island was paralleled on a course to Frobisher's Farthest, a large island at the head of the Bay.

I was helmsman at the outset, for I, too, had sailed and was familiar with these inshore waters. There was a continuous twenty-five knot wind at this time. Her hold filled to the deck with assorted cargo, our Eskimo-built Peterhead boat bested the running seas until noon of that first day. By this time, Takoonagak, fifty-five year old veteran of the Arctic seas, had come to the cabin. The light in his eyes told of a complete return to his environment, a relief from the stagnation of village life. Here was a man, who, on strolling through the village, presented the picture of one in confusion because he, like a herd, had been swept along with the tide of influx into the population of Frobisher Bay. He was born a hunter and a hunter he would remain.

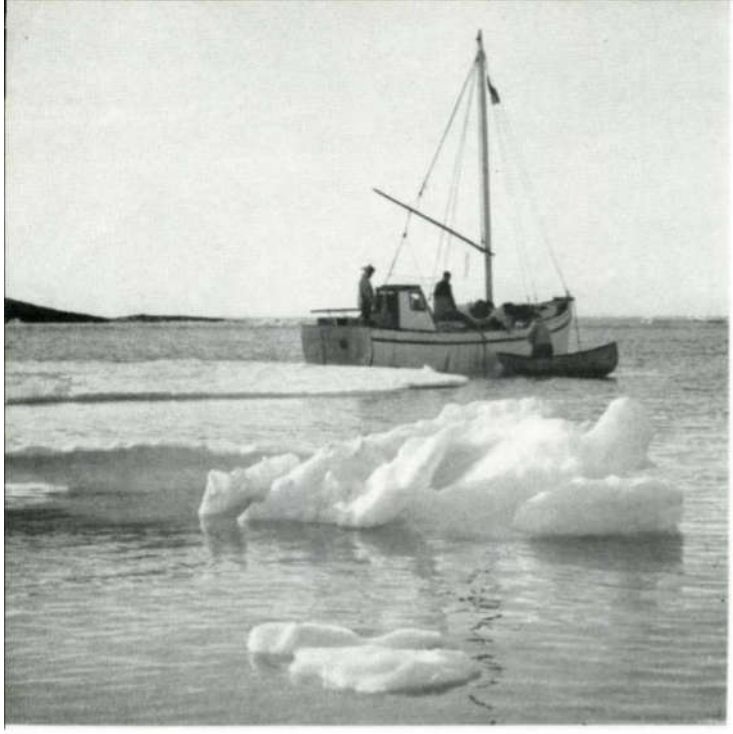
I motioned for him to take over the helm since the wind had risen so much that a shouted word would have been inaudible. As the storm worsened, first a few words were spoken between two and then a council was held to discuss the rising wind. Soon, with the concurrence of all on board, Takoonagak, with the skill of the experienced mariner, headed our craft toward Deception Reef where we anchored in a small sheltered cove on Laird Peninsula in three fathoms of water. We were safe here for the night as the tide was now at its lowest (the tidal range in the Bay being as much as forty feet depending on the diurnal period of the season). The barometer had been dropping considerably for the last two hours but now remained steady at twenty-nine and a half inches, the sign of a better morrow. Over the endless cups of scalding tea, charts were taken out, scanned, traced and then interpreted and comparisons made against age-accumulated knowledge of the seas, shoals and the land. For my friends, the seal, whale and walrus hunt have been their teacher in the ways of their land with information safely and systematically filed in their minds. For an outsider such as I, one must revert to the Second Volume of the Pilot of Arctic Canada, to the treasure in coastal knowledge compiled therein by geographers and hydrographers.

There seemed to be no let-up in the weather by late afternoon, so it was decided that a stop would be made at this location for the night. It was obvious that all could not sleep on board and four of us set up camp on shore. The spot chosen had the well worn look of a thousand previous encampments and the usual tent stone-rings abounded. Camp was set up in a very short time, the gasoline stove lit and a pot of coffee boiling, and we were soon restored from a day's cold journey. Between the bottomless coffee pot and the numerous cigarettes smoked, my thoughts wandered to those days of long ago when this very spot may have been teeming with the tents of many and, I hoped, in much the same circumstances we found ourselves, with abundant food and warm shelter. As was now the custom, my companions, Steve, Kootoo, and Eddie hailed those on the boat to come for a late cup of tea, perhaps for some story-telling or for the eventual game of poker. Our first day had come to an end.

Nothing can be more invigorating than to stand in the light of early dawn with nought but spaciousness to greet the eye in every direction. This was my greeting the following morning—a blustery morning but a fine one by standards of the north country. We weighed anchor



Takoonagak, the captain.



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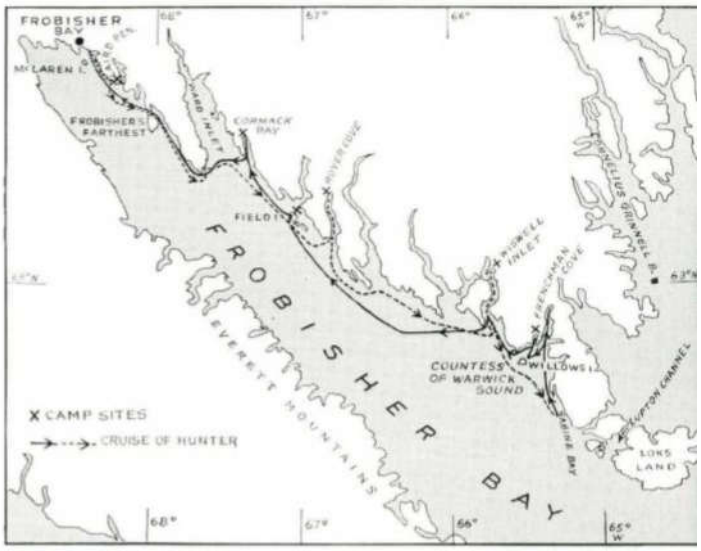


An Eskimo owned Peterhead boat similar to the one used on this expedition, but slightly larger.

at seven and were soon running before a moderate sea, passing Frobisher's Farthest by eight-thirty that morning. We continued sailing until about three in the afternoon when the wind rose slightly and the water became choppy. We estimated the wind to be at twenty to twenty-five knots. Our expedition had come well equipped and we were trailing three eighteen-foot canoes. As we were running before a, by now, extremely heavy sea, it became increasingly difficult to prevent our canoes from becoming swamped. The end trailing canoe did become swamped and there we were in a heaving sea amidst bobbing red fuel tanks, paddles and other floatable gear. A party of three boarded another canoe with the motor already installed and began the round up of those objects which remained afloat and rescue of the canoe which was now bottom up. With tackle from the mast it was hauled on board and lashed side-to for the remainder of the journey. At seven that evening, anchor was dropped in Royer Cove, a travelled distance of some sixty nautical miles from our first encampment. The distance may seem very short in comparison to the number of hours travelled but we had sailed prudently through the many dangerous reefs, our engineer had held back his engine, and our estimated speed had been ten knots. Besides, who would want to have such beautiful scenery as we encountered pass by so quickly without drawing in its full grandeur. For the first time among our many nightly encampments, our group-of-four was obliged to erect a pup tent on the heaving decks as the ground covering of fresh fallen snow had turned to a slimy grey colour which we beheld with repugnance.

We were well underway by eight the next morning and without further incident, our destination, Wiswell Inlet was reached by six that evening. We were about ten miles into the inlet when, because of the temperature differential among high mountains between the lower and upper atmospheres, a sudden blinding snowstorm enveloped our little craft. Stoically, and with his usual sureness, Takoonagak continued to steer the vessel in one direction although he turned it now and again in order to catch a brief glimpse of the shoreline. In an area abounding with iron pyrites, we could not rely completely on our magnetic compass. To add to the near state of confusion, we began to doubt the heading that our 'old man of the sea' was taking, but we were soon safely anchored at the head of a deep fiord about twenty miles up the inlet.

My three companions and I went ashore and on the steep slopes we were compelled to pitch our tent off the horizontal amidst much outcropping of rock and boulders. There is an unspoken law that camping jobs are accomplished on a shared and equal basis in a group such as ours, so I found myself, for the next half hour, stumbling in the now advanced darkness through a glacial deposit of boulders and eroded tundra, to and from the source of fresh water about a mile away. I perceived, the next morning, where I might have taken a less tortuous route. Such are the literally unseen obstacles that stretch an uncompromisingly long day to the limit.

Wiswell Inlet was chosen for our first exploratory probe as being the most likely area to contain signs of soapstone. Thereafter, other likely areas would be examined. While no one was sure that there were any substantial deposits in the inlet itself, it was a likely location because soapstone had often been obtained in the general area many years before for making seal oil lamps and utensils.

As I never had seen a deposit of soapstone, I had to refer to the geological description of a deposit.

Before putting a party on shore, the group decided that some fresh meat should be obtained for the table. Ice had formed to a quarter inch in thickness overnight on the still water and our boat, with its iron-clad bow, crunched its way to the various little coves of the inlet. Soon, Mike shouted, "*taiḳa*", there! In a short time, two silver jar seals were laying on the deck, enabling us to begin our search. With their trained eyes my companions began to look over the formations of rock from the deck of the boat. A chosen area would have to be near the waterline as a giant operation was not envisaged if the material were found. A deposit high above the waterline and too far inland would be costly to mine and to transport.

At last, having chosen a promising area, we anchored and boarded one of our canoes to land. Equipped with geologists' hammers, soapstone carvers' hatchets, and packs or haversacks, a systematic survey was made over area after area, always making sure that a part between two men was not missed. When an area proved barren, we moved to the next, advancing laterally along the coastline. While my companions were planning the next move, I would mark the places explored on a large-scale map of the area. Should my markings have been wrong, the marks our hammers made on the surface of so much rock, I am sure, will remain for a good number of years to come.

About two hours before dark, a halt was called to the day's search and our boat headed for camp at the head of the inlet. Our day was not ended, however, for the diary reads, "4 o'clock, returned to camp at head of inlet—sighted ugjuk (the large bearded seal weighing between 300 and 500 pounds) and gave chase. Returned to camp, without ugjuk, at 7.00 p.m."

As always, the sighting of an ugjuk means an extra exciting hunt compared to that of the ubiquitous harbour seal. It always means much more meat from a single kill. For two hours, the chase went on—first along the steep, rocky shoreline, where the wise old one can hide behind small jutting rocks but with half a dozen pairs of eyes watching every little shadow or movement, not a single nook escaped notice. Soon, another shout of "*taiḳa*", there he is! is followed by a fusillade of gunfire. All that one is able to glimpse is a huge pair of flippers as the mammal sounds. Then, he may suddenly veer from shore and head for the widest part of the bay to reappear several hundred yards from the last position. Of course, if the helmsman had been as crafty as the old codger, we would have been almost directly over him when he next surfaced. But it is difficult to communicate with the undersea creature and he reappears well away from us—a small bobbing head on a large expanse of water. Again, there is a fusillade of gunshots and bullets splatter all around him as he makes another frantic dive. It is hoped that a bullet out of several will eventually find its mark. With but a few seconds in which to focus the eye and to refocus a set of gunsights it takes an unusual marksman to score a hit. When a group such as ours is all in on the shoot and a certain amount of rivalry tends to exist, we find that almost all the shots are premature. But from Mike one could always hear the shout, "*ḳokiutpuḳ*", it's hit, or in more direct meaning, "I shot it". So, if it had in fact been hit, he would have rightfully gone ahead to claim the kill, particularly the sealskin which commanded a high price that year. We were not to have the satisfaction of an ugjuk kill for our quarry finally managed to lose itself in a place which only it knew—in the haunts of the undersea life. If our survival had depended on the killing of this mammal, one or two of the best shots would have had the privilege of making a sure kill. As it

Some of the party launching a canoe; left to right, Noah, Mike, Takoonagak, and James Wemigwans.

was, our galley (the deck of the boat) was plentifully stocked with meat and when our search for the day had halted, two hunters had been dispatched ahead of the boat to hunt up additional meat on the way to camp.

On the fifth day we decamped from Wiswell Inlet for further searches close to the mouth of the inlet. Our master skipper, Takoonagak, would talk about how the people would stop somewhere near the mouth of the inlet to gather a few pieces of soapstone with which to make additional oil lamps or pots. It had been such a long time ago, he would say, that he could not remember the exact locations. Of the availability of soapstone, he was sure, and so were we, because as of old, his judgment could be respected.

There seemed to be no more promising locations and a council was held to decide the next course of action. It was agreed to the last man that an attempt to reach Cornelius Grinnell Bay should be made which meant an extensive journey to Loks Land and Davis Strait. Thereupon, a three hour southeasterly course was held, past Cape Sabine and only two more hours would have placed us in Lupton Channel and thence into Davis Strait. The September storms were not to leave us and we encountered such a storm as to make our decks awash from one trough to the next. Our vessel was now broadside to the wind so that most rolls were beyond the forty-five degree angle, which made us fasten our benumbed fingers to the ship lest we fall overboard. We returned for refuge to Countess of Warwick Sound.

The dawn of 24 September was clear and very cold with a strong northwest wind coming down the thirty-mile-wide bay. Our party ventured into the open water as far as Willows Island but even in the shelter of this island the seas were breaking over the bow. And so it came about that we found ourselves taking refuge behind Kodlunarn Island, the site of Martin Frobisher's first venture into gold mining in the new land.

The call of the hunt, which was always like a magnet to my companions—and indeed to me, having come from a long line of hunters of the forests—influenced our decision to hold an arctic hare round-up on the island. After the long fattening season of summer, we pictured many juicy rabbits for our common dinner pot. Having anchored our ship in the lee of the island, the hunters fanned out and advanced in a nine-tined formation across the island. The island was so large that we soon lost sight of one another. I did not get any rabbits that day as I was too busy looking for the site of Frobisher's ancient diggings. About four hours later, eight arctic hares the size of the arctic fox were brought aboard and a pot was immediately started for the feast. After walking for many hours on that windblown island, my appetite was such that I, alone, was quite ready to eat an entire hare.

Having shot two geese and replenished our galley, we weighed anchor to seek shelter for the night. A small cove was chosen and entered at low tide. As our shore-going canoe was about to be loaded, two seals popped their heads above the water close inshore and the chase was on again. When a third turn had been made in the same area, a shudder ran through the vessel and she stopped, rising about a foot above the waterline. We had become stuck on a flat rock while the tide was completely receded. The bell for full speed astern rang in my ears but she would not budge from the table of rock. At once, all hands went over the side with precut lengths of timber to prop the boat in an upright position as a safety measure. After a close inspection of the hull, we were satisfied that there had been no damage other than to our dignity. Within two hours, our little vessel was afloat and camp was set up on shore.

During the chase of the two seals inshore, it was fascinating to watch as the seal, afraid with the noise of our boat's engines and our blocking of its avenue of escape into deeper water, swam about a yard from the shoreline making a slight bump on the still water so that its direction of travel could easily be seen. But now and then, the shadows of waves created by its travel and the shadows cast by boulders would tend to fool my friend Noah, for quite often, I could see that he had been firing at an immobile rock. Realizing his error, he would let

James Wemigwans, left, and Mike tie ridgepole to tent.

Members of the expedition absorbed in a poker game in their tent, using rifle shells for counters. Above, Noah, a resident of Frobisher Bay.

out such a guffaw that so startled the others as to make them cast about for a glimpse of other seals.

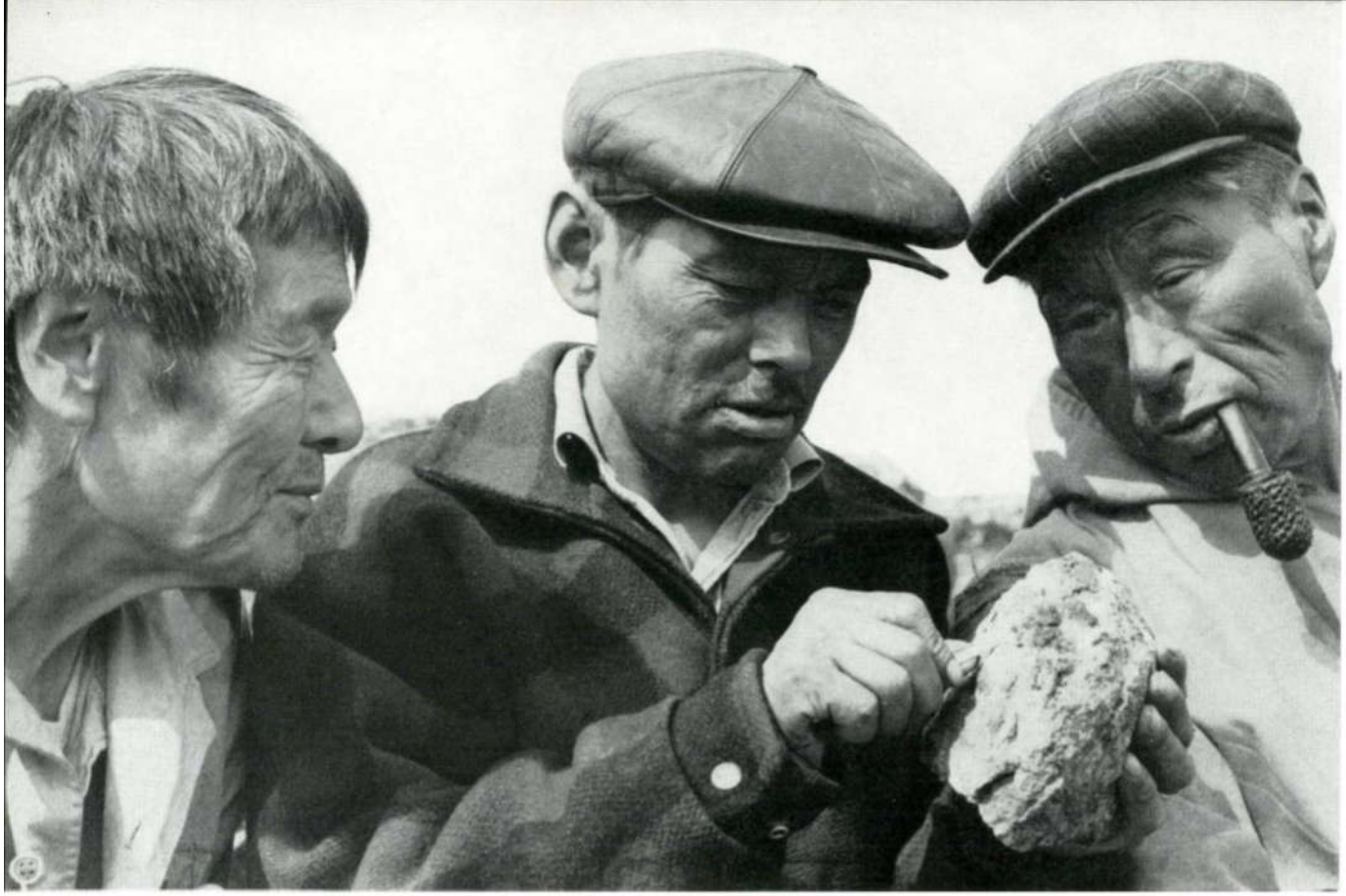
This was one of the more beautiful spots which had been chosen for a camp all during our trip. Being my turn to fetch water for the pots, a dismal find confronted me, for all of the little streams which had flowed so abundantly down the mountainsides had now been thoroughly frozen and would not yield another gallon of water until next summer. I continued walking for another half a mile to a high bluff and at the top my efforts were rewarded. A fair sized lake stretched before me, cradled in gently sloping formations of rock with patches of still autumn-coloured tundra here and there to offset the bare effect of snow and grey rock. It was quite dark when I returned to camp, and in the morning, snow would have to be used for cooking.

Soon it was time to call the others from the boat for a story-telling session and as usual the evening turned into an occasion for a poker game. These games of poker are interesting because no one ever seems to become rich even on continual wins. The ante, in most cases, are rifle shells and each is given a denomination. A .22 would be ten cents; a .222, twenty-five cents; a .243, thirty cents; and a .303 or .300, fifty cents. It most often turned out that one player would soon have won all of another's ammunition of one special type. One would wonder how the loser was going to be able to hunt the next day but this situation is always resolved by the trading of ammunition, sometimes in the middle of the game or at the end. Ammunition was about the sole ante, being personal property as well as being numerous compared to other personal property such as sleeping bags and hides. The seals, ducks and arctic hare, being communal property, could not be regarded as bartering items although I have seen, on other occasions, whole seals put up as ante.

To assure our people at home that there would be no need to worry over our foray into the storm flecked waters of Frobisher Bay, we had set a return date for the tenth day after our departure. As the weather had been deteriorating at a most alarming rate and the snow was now three inches deep, it was decided to end our search and return home. It had taken three days to reach Wiswell Inlet and this was taken into account so that our arrival in Frobisher would now fall on the ninth day.

The morning of the 25th was windless and at seven our party was under way. Wiswell Inlet would be our first stop in order to pick up our cache of empty gasoline drums, premium items in this part of the country, and our spare canoe. By eleven o'clock, this small chore had been done and a course was set for Cormack Bay, the site of an old Eskimo encampment and a former Hudson's Bay Company post. But this position was not reached that day as a very heavy snowfall was with us for most of the afternoon. At six-thirty that evening, shelter was sought in a protected cove on Field Island, a spot which was well known to me because of a previous year's unfortunate separation from my sleeping bag.

While crossing the wide part of the Bay below Field Island that day, a massive iceberg was sighted and our boat drew close. It was estimated to be at least two hundred feet in height and four hundred feet at the base above the waterline. We suspected that this berg had calved from the Grinnell Glacier, about twenty-five miles distant across the bay, whose iridescent top was accentuated in height by the reflected rays of the sun slightly above it. It was known to be a mere 2,700 feet high but



Noah, Mike, and Takoonagak examine a sample of stone.

its giant fingers reaching down into the numerous deep fiords which abound on that side of the bay seemed to turn it into a huge claw ready to rake in whatever was destined to pass that way.

Back at the cove, the *Hunter* had been safely anchored in a sheltered place and our tent had been pitched in three inches of snow. After the usual excavation of small willow roots and boulders from the interior, a return was made to the everlasting business of cooking seal meat and boiling tea—for the tea is never steeped but boiled vigorously for a minute and a half so that whoever drinks it knows that he will be able to stand further rigours if he survives it. At least that is the standing point of humour on trips of this kind.

The wind had increased to almost gale force with the ceasing of the snow and at midnight I was sure that our tent would depart at any moment. The stone ring and anchors that surrounded it held through the night, however, and daybreak greeted us with winds of forty to fifty miles an hour.

The next day was spent in adjusting cargo and swabbing and wiping the deck before the water froze to form a sheet of ice. At this juncture, as previously planned, Steve and Kootoo prepared to take leave of our little party, to continue their hunt for another week. Provisions were looked over and sorted and gasoline mixed and measured so that at three in the afternoon we left them well stocked. Our destination was still Cormack Bay for we especially wished to see if there were any other people left at that camp. Our arrival found it deserted and everything covered with a white blanket of snow. With very little desire to land for our usual nightly ritual, our pup tent was again pitched on the heaving deck and darkness quickly obliterated the countryside. While the world immediately outside our tent was dark and gloomy, we prepared to eat our last supper in style, with a menu that could not have been equalled by the best cafés of Paris or Montreal. Into the pot disappeared the heart, liver, kidneys, webbed feet and head of Mitirk, the lowly eider duck, followed by much the same of Nauyak, the gull, all topped by that most magnificent of birds, the Canada goose. This repast is the crowning reward after spending many cold hours on the water.

The final day, 27 September, was fair and we ran before a steady fifteen to twenty knot wind, and after logging some three-hundred and fifty miles, anchored in Frobisher at three in the afternoon. We were home—for most of us, back to our jobs, and for the remainder, back to their carving. It had been a good trip, even if we had not found the soapstone deposits we had been seeking.

For me, this had been one of the more extensive journeys in my years at Frobisher. To my friends, the Inuit, it had been a journey among other journeys in their land. ◆

ALBANY - pawn in Anglo-French conflict

BY RICHARD K. MATHEWS

ALBANY FORT ON JAMES BAY, the Hudson's Bay Company's oldest continuously operating post, has spent most of its long career in the calm pursuit of the fur trade. In the seventeenth century, however, it was the scene of dramatic—and sometimes ludicrous—armed conflict between the French and the British. It thus provides an obscure but lively footnote to the long chronicle of struggle of these two nations for control of the North American continent. In 1690 King William III listed French actions there as a major *causus belli* for the war with France which in its American phase was named after him; in the period it was attacked three times by opposing expeditions and changed hands twice. After 1693 it was bypassed by history, to become just one of the fur trading posts that increasingly dotted the map of Canada as the Europeans penetrated.

The charter which Charles II granted in 1670 to the Governor and Company of Adventurers of England Trading into Hudson's Bay stipulated that the Adventurers should have the "sole Trade and Commerce" of of the entire huge region drained by Hudson Bay and Strait. Being thus encouraged the Company had established three precarious posts on James Bay by 1680. They were prospering; within a decade a financial report of the Company estimated that from posts on Hudson Bay "our Returnes in Beavor this year (By Gods Blessing) are modestly expected to be worth £20,000.", a sum vastly superior to the total original stock issued. London was on the way to surpassing Vienna, Leipzig and Amsterdam as a great fur centre, and the coffee house auctions, where the bidding on a bundle of pelts would go on until a candle burnt out, were lively and profitable occasions.

For the French as well the fur trade was the chief economic interest in Canada, and it had been their monopoly until the establishment of the Hudson's Bay Company. They were as much hostile to the English presence in the interior of North America as they were to costly competition, and these two sentiments quickly coalesced into an anger that was far from impotent. The Gallic counterpart of the London company, the Compagnie du Nord, which likewise had a royal charter granting it exclusive trade rights in Hudson Bay, thus easily succeeded in enlisting the support of the government of New France for the re-establishment of its monopoly. This resulted initially in a set of orders issued on February 12, 1686 by Brisay de Denonville, the Quebec governor of New France, for a military expedition north to capture the English posts. In these orders he stated that the expedition was to be punitive; it was to avenge the alleged mistreatment of French traders by Hudson's Bay Company agents. This statement, however, had more to do with public relations than reality and Denonville remarked more candidly the following fall that the troops were dispatched "as much to put into effect our grant as to prevent the trade of the English."

By March the force was assembled at the little town of Montreal. It was composed of seventy Canadian irregulars, thirty French soldiers, a few Indians to serve as guides and interpreters, and a priest. At its head was the Pierre, Chevalier de Troyes, a man of considerable resourcefulness and courage, whose journal of the trek is the only detailed account that has come down to us. He had been in Canada only seven months, in command of a company of soldiers.

The French started out on sleds, carrying the thirty-five canoes which they launched when the spring break-up came. Their route was neither charted nor easy; it followed what was to become the great voyageur route up the Ottawa River from the St. Lawrence to Lake Timiskaming. Thence, after a series of portages, it entered Lake Abitibi where the Fort Abitibi was founded and three men left behind to trade with the Indians. Next the route followed the Abitibi downstream to the Moose, which led to salt water on James Bay. Because of the difficulty of terrain, the scarcity of supplies, and the rotting ice, the trip was extremely arduous, but the band pushed on northwards, stopping each Sunday for mass and calling a day's halt for Easter service which Father Silvy celebrated.

Canoeing down the Moose River, de Troyes' men reached its mouth, where the Hudson's Bay Company's Moose Fort was located. The English there were caught completely off-guard and the French made themselves masters of the place in two hours of virtually bloodless struggle. They then proceeded east to take Charles Fort at Rupert River (later Rupert's House), the Company's oldest post, established eighteen years before and named for Charles II. Here again they defeated the surprised English with little difficulty, capturing as well a ship on

Sources for this article include Hudson's Bay Record Society Volumes V, XI, XX, XXI, from which quotations are given by permission of the Governor and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company; Nellis M. Crouse, "Lemoyne d'Iberville"; J. B. Tyrrell, Champlain Society Vol. XVIII; Guy Frégault, "Iberville le Conquérant"; "Journal de l'expedition du Chevalier de Troyes à la Baie d'Hudson en 1686," ed. Ivanhoe Caron, from which quotations and map are used with permission. The author, a Harvard graduate, has travelled widely as reporter and free-lance.

which they found the sentry asleep and the crew in nightshirts. More important, they took the fort's cannon which were to prove of much use later on. They destroyed the fort and left its disheartened former tenants among its charred ruins with but "a little powder shott and a nett to gett their liveings" as one of the unfortunates later testified in the formal British protest to France.

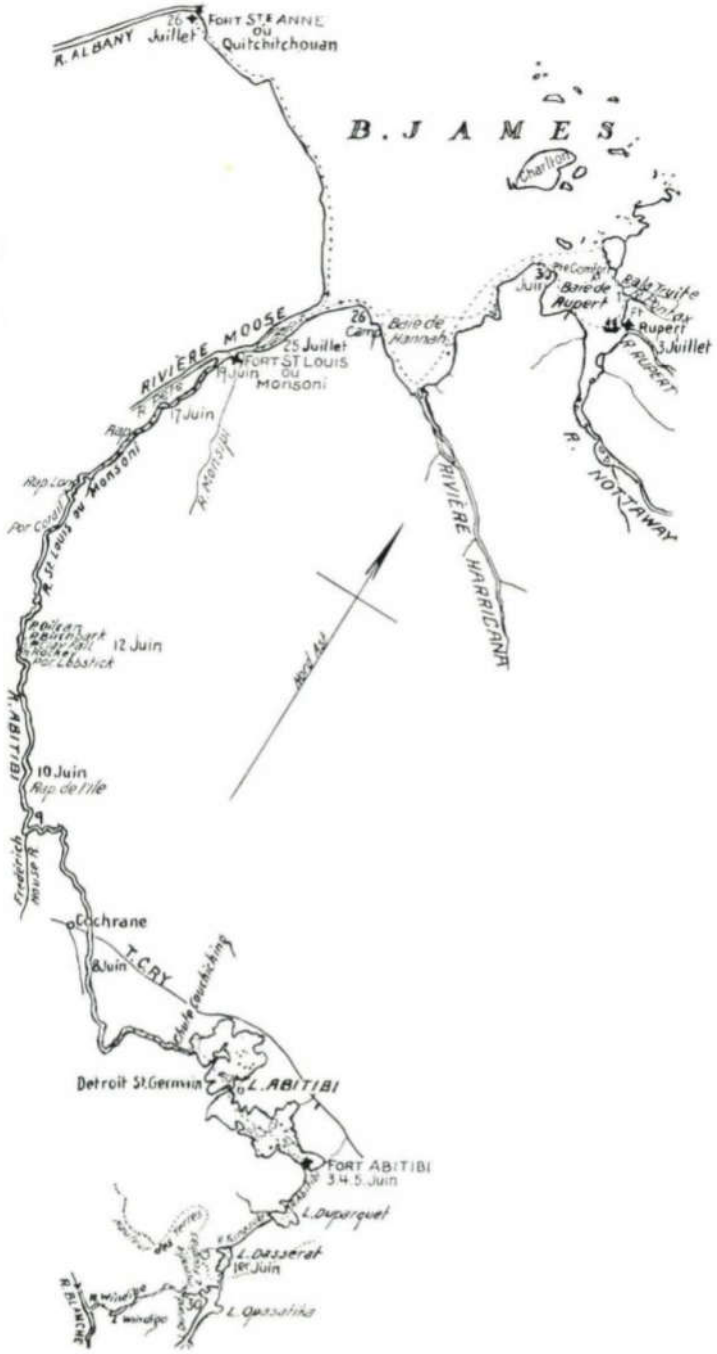
All was now ready for the campaign against Albany, the prime objective of the expedition. Established at an uncertain date between 1674 and 1679, the fort (first known as Chechettuan or Chichewan) had been made the Company's chief post in the "Bottome of the Bay" three years before de Troyes' expedition, it "being the place of greatest Trade and Resort of the Indians." It was the funnel through which all English fur trade between the Bay and the Lake Superior region passed, and it was the residence of the Company's overseas governor, Henry Sergeant. As such it was a more substantial fort than the two the French had just taken so easily. De Troyes noted that "le garde y estoit fort exacte et la place tres bien munie et fortifiée" and deemed himself most fortunate to have acquired the cannon and ship of Charles Fort before attempting to take it.

Splitting his forces, de Troyes himself departed with a group of canoes along the vast mud-flats that border the western shores of James Bay. He sent his second-in-command, Pierre Le Moyne, Sieur d'Iberville and his brother Sainte-Hélène with a contingent aboard the captured ship.

Albany was situated on a peninsula in the island-clogged estuary of the Albany River. It was eight miles from James Bay proper and completely invisible from off-shore. De Troyes' war canoes might well have bypassed it completely, but the French heard gunshots which defined the position for the aggressors. If the English were expecting an attack, it was from ships in the Bay but since the Strait is not ice-free till well into July, no attack could be expected until that time. The overland route was all but inconceivable, and it was indeed the genius of the French plan to have tried it. This line of thought probably accounts for the unpreparedness of Albany. As de Troyes approached, an elevated sentry box the English had especially constructed for spotting ships was left unmanned. This allowed him to enter the river's mouth, pass within easy range of the fort's guns, and land, just out of their reach, on a forested island in the estuary.

Across the narrow channel, about forty paces from the water's edge, stood the fort. It was a rectangular structure with walls of squared timbers. At each corner was an eighteen-foot square bastion from which four mounted cannon could fire down on assailants. The precision of its

Route of the Chevalier de Troyes in 1686 overland from Montreal to Albany (Quitchitchouan) as shown in the "Journal" of de Troyes edited by Caron. The map on the right shows the northern part of de Troyes' journey to James Bay. Fort St. Louis or Monsoni was Moose Factory; Fort Rupert was Charles Fort on Rupert's River.



design and construction persuaded the 1960 archaeological party of W. A. Kenyon of the Royal Ontario Museum that its builder knew something of military engineering. (See reports in *The Beaver*, Summer 1961 and Autumn 1965.) The packed-clay floor was found to be still almost perfectly level two and a half centuries later, the bastion traces in geometrically exact positions, and the whole laid out on a precise north-south axis. Set into the walls were two large buildings which housed the thirty or forty Company servants, Governor Sergeant, his wife, son and domestics. Fort Albany was surrounded by a moat, still vaguely visible today as a vegetation-filled trench, and already in ill-repair in 1686.

After two days occupied in what the governor later described as "Vieweing and Draweing out the Forme and Figure" of the fort, de Troyes, on 22 July, sent a message to Sergeant demanding its surrender. He probably hoped the superior numbers of the French would frighten the English into immediate capitulation; in any case, he wanted a swift victory as hunger was taking its toll on the strength and morale of his men. The French commander offered what he deemed "conditions sures et honorables" and threatened to give no quarter and show no mercy if resistance were offered. To this the Governor replied non-committally that he did not want to fight any more than he wanted to surrender. This indecisive answer convinced de Troyes that his opponent was a man of ceremony and only needed a couple of cannon blasts to make him give up the place with honour. Sergeant, however, later testified in London that he found the French demand "very Surprizeing," the more so since England and France were then officially at peace, and that he let de Troyes know in no uncertain terms that he would defend the fort if attacked.

Realizing that a full-fledged assault on Albany would require the cannon which, along with the rest of his men, had not yet arrived aboard the captured ship, de Troyes set his men to digging gun emplacements. He also sent groups of them scurrying around the fort, yelling, screaming and firing madly to convince "les anglois" that the French were a "quentité de monde" and not a ragged, hunger-enfeebled band of perhaps fifty. Instead of moving against the French while they were still without big guns, the English (because they were cowards, de Troyes says) let the aggressors go about their work "aussi trenquillement que si nous eussions esté a leurs gages".

But if the English were not causing any trouble, other factors were. Casualties would have been intolerably high if the French attacked before Iberville arrived with the cannon, and in waiting they were quickly approaching starvation. A hunter de Troyes sent out to relieve the situation was too weak from emaciation to return and fell dead in the woods. To bolster the sagging spirits of his men, the commander decided to seek the help of St Anne, chosen earlier as the expedition's patron. With as much pomp as the brush and mosquitoes of the Albany estuary would permit, Father Silvy conducted a ceremony in which each man vowed to donate forty *solz* to St Anne's church at Beaupré on the St Lawrence if she successfully intervened. Furthermore, the English flag which the men could see fluttering above one of the fort's bastions would adorn the church's walls. De Troyes tells us that as soon as the ceremony was concluded, the con-

trary winds which had been keeping his ship out in the Bay shifted and brought it in to the Albany. Miraculously or otherwise, the ship arrived and the situation was saved. It is not known if St Anne was later repaid.

Immediately the French placed their cannon in the entrenchments they had already excavated, and on the evening of 25 July all was prepared. With mischievous pride, de Troyes tells how he directed the opening barrage at the governor's living quarters where he, dining with his wife and the minister appeared "fort tranquille". The place was soon a shambles. Mrs Sergeant, "having almost been hit in the face by two cannon balls . . . fainted with fright." No one, however, was injured.

Next morning after over a hundred direct hits from close range, there was little left either of the log walls of Fort Albany or of the English spirit of resistance. Panic seems to have seized Sergeant's men, at least if de Troyes is to be believed, and they conducted themselves in the highly original manner which the French commander describes as follows: During a cannon bombardment,

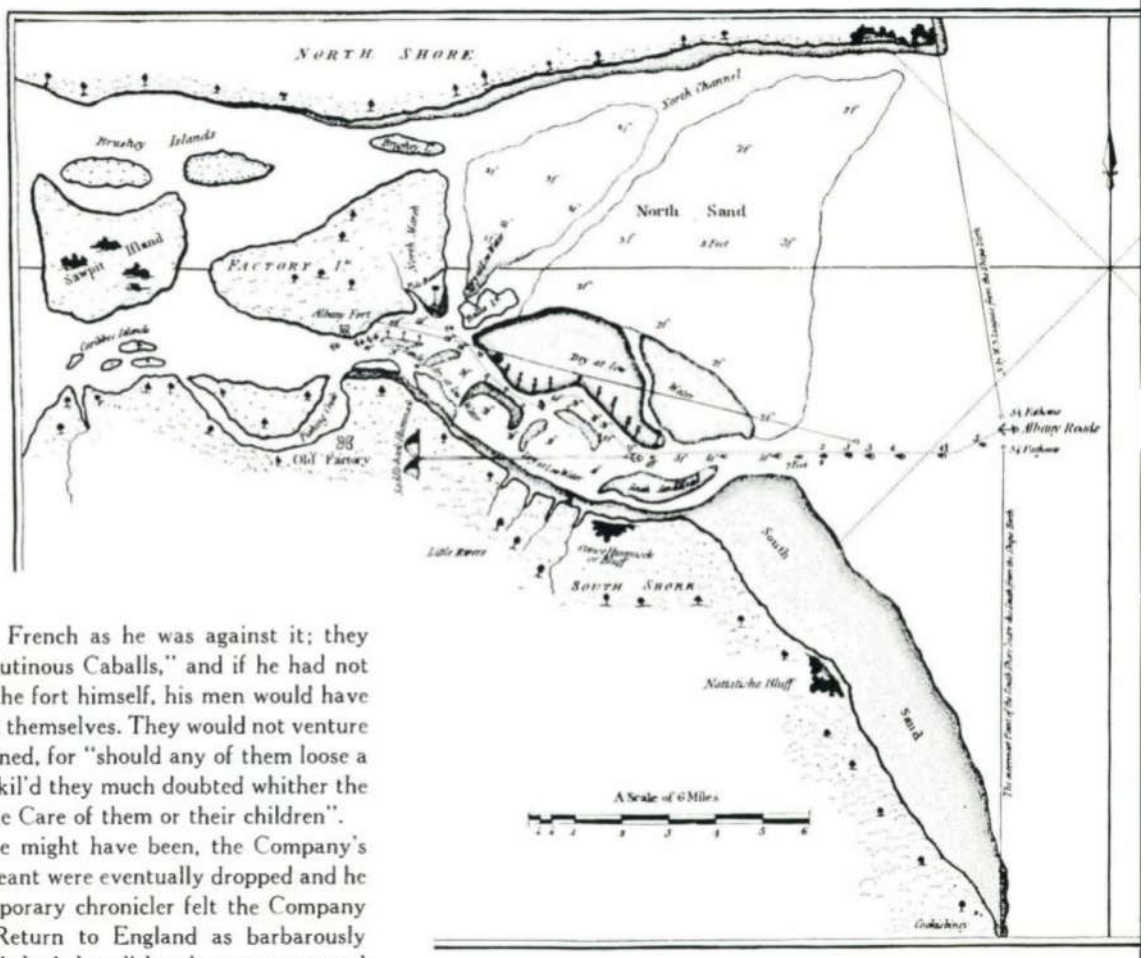
> . . . our men cried out a loud "Vive le Roi." The English answered back with a similar cry. But it seemed to us to be in a stifled tone, that they were hidden in a cellar, which they admitted since then, and that the cry "Vive le Roi" with which they had answered us was to communicate . . . that they wished to surrender, not being brave enough to come into view and take down the flag which appeared on one of their bastions.

De Troyes' account sounds fairly improbable, but there is little doubt that the English had had enough of the engagement. Accordingly, Governor Sergeant borrowed the white apron of his maid, had it attached to a stick, and sent forth his Protestant minister to signal surrender. After some contention, the cleric and de Troyes' envoys agreed that their chiefs should meet, for the sake of neutrality, on boats in the river midway between the Factory and the French camp.

The English governor and the French officer began their conference by drinking a toast in the former's wine to their respective monarchs. Upon further offers of wine, de Troyes reminded Sergeant that he "had not come to drink and did not lack refreshment;" the governor, he said, could come to his camp, where he would offer him better wine than his own, although, he added to himself that he had only a small flask of eau de vie which he was keeping in case of extreme necessity. He preferred not to reveal his extreme shortage of supplies. When the discussion turned from wine to terms of surrender, it was agreed that the French would occupy the fort and seize all Hudson's Bay Company property therein, including a consignment of beaver which the Company asserted in official damage claims presented later by London to the Paris government included fifty thousand pelts. The English were to be allowed to keep their personal property and Sergeant would retain the services of "his Minister his Three men Servants and his Maid servant" and could even continue to sport his side-arms. The terms concluded and signed, de Troyes assembled his tattered band into some semblance of military formation and marched them into the fort to the rhythm of wooden drums fashioned on the spot. Albany was renamed Fort Ste Anne, the Hudson's Bay Company lost its last post on James Bay, and the success of de Troyes' mission was complete.

Why the English had allowed this mission to be achieved so easily at Albany is puzzling; indeed, it was a subject of much controversy and bitterness the following year in London. The Governor and Committee of the Company placed the blame squarely on Henry Sergeant, who was accused of "ill Conduct perfidiousnesse & Cowardize" for his alleged disarming of his men and reluctance to fire on the French. Legal action was initiated to deprive him of the £356 in back salary he was owed. The Company's opinion was based on the testimony of Sergeant's subordinates, three of whom asserted at the hearing that the Company men were prepared to defend the fort till death and that only Sergeant had lacked a resistance spirit. "For Severall tymes" the subordinates related "Wee asked him if Wee should fire or Contrive some meanes to oppose the French; his Answere allwayes was doe what you please, . . ." The witnesses were especially upset by the governor's apparent conviviality with de Troyes: ". . . likewise it was Strange . . . that the Governor should have . . . Sent his owne boat back to the Factory for a Bottle of Wyne and a Glasse to Drink with the French while hee was amakeing Articles [of surrender] with them. . . ." An affidavit sworn by four Company servants under Sergeant at the same hearing corroborates this version and perhaps accounts for the tranquility with which the French were allowed to dig in gun emplacements before their cannon arrived. When the English fired ". . . 3 Guns agt. the said French [Sergeant] was very Angry and forbidd the Fireing of any more Gun's agt. the French . . . without his order, And when the French observ'd wee left off fireing they proceeded to bring up their Great Gun's, and within 3 dayes they raised a Battery agt. the said Albany Fort, in which 3 dayes there was not a Gun fired . . . to disturbe or hinder the French . . .". The signers felt that Sergeant might well have saved the fort by vigorous leadership, especially at the beginning. They valued the loss of goods, stores, and provisions at Fort Albany at £20,000.

Sergeant's version of the story is so divergent it hardly seems to describe the same events. He dismissed the charges as "Meere fiction" which were "both Scandalous and false". His men, he stated, were as much bent on



Samuel Hearne's plan of the mouth of Albany River, 1774, with which he gave some directions for laying buoys.
H B C ARCHIVES

surrendering to the French as he was against it; they formed "Severall Mutinous Caballs," and if he had not finally surrendered the fort himself, his men would have mutinied and done it themselves. They would not venture their lives, he explained, for "should any of them loose a Legg or Arme or be kil'd they much doubted whither the Company would take Care of them or their children".

Whatever the case might have been, the Company's charges against Sergeant were eventually dropped and he was paid. A contemporary chronicler felt the Company "us'd him at his Return to England as barbarously almost as the French had done," but he soon recouped his fortunes in the service of James II.

Preparing to leave James Bay, de Troyes sent Henry Sergeant and his men to Charlton Island where the Company had a depot and the vanquished Englishmen could expect to meet the annual ship which would carry them home. There is a certain irony in the victory of the Frenchman over the Briton. The two should never have met. Sergeant was ordered to leave the Bay long before de Troyes arrived at Fort Albany, but the ship carrying these orders was lost; and de Troyes was naturally unaware that the Quebec government had received instructions shortly after he left not to provoke the English in Canada.

The French commander left Albany overland for Quebec on 19 August 1686, leaving behind Iberville and Sainte-Hélène at the head of forty men.

With the Chevalier de Troyes' departure from James Bay, the first chapter of the Anglo-French power struggle there ends with unheroic defeat for the English and bold and brilliant success for the French.

The three years after de Troyes' conquest of Albany were uneventful. Low on food and trade goods, the French party there did what it could to combat the spectres of scurvy and starvation and to gather beaver pelts from the Indians. Iberville spent most of a year there, but realizing that the full economic potential of the French positions could not be exploited unless stronger support from Paris and Quebec were obtained, he embarked for the court at Versailles. There he was received sympathetically and aid came in the form of a fast new frigate, *Soleil d'Afrique*, on which he returned to James Bay in September 1688. Still under thirty, Iberville had just been promoted to the command of all French activities in the region. He anchored at Charlton Island, where an accumulation of two years' pelts was put aboard. Wishing to gather the most impressive cargo possible, he immediately left for Fort Ste Anne (Albany) with his brother Maricourt in a small shallop, instructing the captain of the *Soleil* to depart for Europe within ten days if he had not returned. The season was already advanced and the ship would have to clear Hudson Strait before it was blocked by the ice. Iberville arrived at the fort on schedule and quickly loaded its consignment of furs. His little vessel then departed down the estuary of the Albany River. Suddenly, just off shore it found itself in the shadow of two H B C frigates, the 100-ton, 18-gun *Churchill* and the smaller *Yonge*.

The Governor and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company had in no way become reconciled to the loss of their forts on James Bay. Indeed, they could hardly

afford to; without the pelts they brought in, profits dwindled. No dividends at all had been paid since the handsome fifty percent of 1684. By the spring of 1688, the Company was prepared to act. Its position, however, was rendered ambiguous by a truce concluded between London and Paris stipulating that the present North American positions of each should remain unchanged from the time of the truce's ratification until 1689.

In May 1688, James II appointed a new governor of the Bottom of the Bay, a Captain John Marsh, about whom little is known save that he was highly esteemed by the Committee. According to his instructions from the Company, upon arrival at Albany River Marsh is "to build and settle a Fort & Factory" at a place selected in consultation with Captain Bond who was in command of the *Churchill* taking him to the Bay. This was to be done without annoying the French since the truce, of which Marsh was given a copy, enjoined both sides to "live in good mutuall Correspondencye untill the First of January next . . ." and until further orders. After which injunction (and a similar instruction went to Captain Bond) he is granted, in the event of aggression and provocation ". . . free Liberty to oppose force with force and not onely soe in your owne defence But wee doe alsoe order and enjoyne you to pursue your advantages and upon such just oppertunityes to recover his Maties. [Majesty's] Rights & our's which were unjustly Seized. . ." Captain Bond's instructions went even further and spoke not only of the recovery of rights and properties but of ". . . the utter extirpating any Forreigner out of our Priviledges and Territoryes". It would seem that the Company might welcome force to repel, thus permitting it to forget about a truce which deprived it of its most important source of furs.

Marsh left London early in the summer with eighty-five men and two new ships built for the purpose. He arrived at the Albany River in September—just in time to intercept the fur-laden shallop of the French. Seeing that escape was impossible and confrontation suicidal, Iberville, acting with swiftness and decision, immediately returned to the fort and ordered his men—they came to a grand total of sixteen—to take canoes and cut loose the channel marker buoys necessary for navigation in the river's shoal-filled mouth. Despite a rain of English pot-shots, this was quickly accomplished. In short order both ships were helplessly stranded on sand-bars, giving the French valuable time to plan their defences. The *Yonge* managed to get clear and proceeded upstream, cautiously sounding her way, to a bush-covered island about a mile from the fort. Here they dug in, "Sett up their tent & Raised a Barracado for their defence." Later they were joined by the lightened *Churchill*.

During the first two weeks an Englishman was shot by a French sniper and presumably Marsh's men should have acted on their orders to "repell force with force". Instead, they dared not venture forth from their entrenchments, having no idea that they out-numbered their adversaries five to one. Meanwhile, the French kept up small harassing attacks designed to fray their nerves, to weaken their morale, and especially to foster scurvy in their ranks by preventing them from leaving their camp to hunt fresh meat. This harassment ceased in late October when Iberville decided on a policy of relatively peaceful coexistence; he was afraid that if things were too difficult for the English at Albany, they might leave altogether, only to menace other French posts. After the intruders' boats were immobilized by the winter ice he might act differently, but for now he was accommodating enough; this man, who made an entire career of fighting the Anglo-Saxon, even invited the Company officers to dine with him and the occasion was accounted something of a social success. An Englishman present reported, after the death of Marsh, "a pretence of A Treaty and amicable Liveing togeather & severall Mutuall vissets passing to & fro." Perhaps at this point Iberville believed English assertions that they had come only to trade and wished to eschew all violence. He did in fact barter some of his accumulated beaver for English goods which he could in turn trade to the Indians for more pelts. To convince him of their purportedly peaceful intentions, the English sent Iberville a hostage. This, however, was a bad move; the hostage switched loyalties and gave the French commander to understand that the English were only waiting till their ships were freed from the ice to seize the French fort.

Meantime relations were also strained by the French capture of Captain Bond and his mate, who, as a Company officer later indignantly describes it, "Foolishly wandring to hunt Pateridges, were them selves caught Like woodcocks . . .". A party sent out to find the missing hunters was also captured and when a delegation of seventeen came to protest these actions to Iberville, it was likewise siezed. Learning there was sickness—mainly scurvy, of which twenty-five ultimately died—the French took special pains to capture the Company doctor. All the while the English did almost nothing to resist, passively watching their numerical superiority dwindle in the face of disease, death and capture. Marsh himself died in January 1689.

It was now for Iberville to finish this game of cat-and-mouse in which he was the very cunning mouse pitted against an extraordinarily inept cat. Placing several cannon above the English camp, he let fly with a few salvos which produced more noise than damage. He then

delivered a surrender ultimatum which the English rejected, claiming they still had forty men in sound health and fighting spirit. A few skirmishes followed and another ultimatum was sent. This time it included the threat of total massacre if any more resistance were offered, and the white flag was duly raised. At the time, a Company servant later reported, there remained but eight men in sound condition and even these were in distress for want of water. Surrender terms were agreed upon in which Iberville pledged to pay the salaries of the Company officers and to provide means of transporting the prisoners back to England. To effect the latter, he allowed his vanquished foe to sail in the *Huband*, a Company frigate he had captured, sailing himself in the *Churchill*, at Rupert River. Captain Bond, the foolish partridge hunter, was sent with other ship captains overland to Quebec where his wife charged that he endured two years of "miserable Servitude".

Thus ended this forlorn and rather ridiculous campaign which for sheer incompetence must have few parallels in the three centuries of the Hudson's Bay Company's existence.

In August Iberville's brother Sainte-Hélène joined him at Albany, bringing reinforcements overland, and carrying orders for Iberville to return to Quebec with his largest ship and cargo of furs. He sailed in September 1689 in the *Churchill* and although he was later to return to the north of the Bay he never again saw Albany.

For the next four years it is not known what went on at Albany but it is safe to conclude that it was continuously occupied by at least a handful of Frenchmen who carried on the fur trade.

The Company had been moved to sponsor Marsh's unfortunate expedition by the major loss of profits resulting from French control of the James Bay posts. Four years later the situation was unchanged and the Company was forced, for its survival, to make another attempt to retake them. In 1692 three ships and over a hundred men under the command of James Knight, newly appointed Governor of the Bottom of the Bay, set sail from London on an expedition ". . . for the Honour of Our Nation & the Recovery of our Just Rights" in the region. This time the Company was unhampered by an Anglo-French truce such as the one that had contributed to Marsh's failure; indeed, by then William III was engaged in a full-scale war against the expansionism of Louis XIV. While Marsh's orders had been vague and ambiguous, Knight is unequivocally commanded to ". . . immediately without any loss of time attack the French where they are," by surprise if possible. He is told either to found a new post or to capture a French-occupied one. He chose to do the latter, and selected Albany, where he had been Chief Factor a decade before, because it brought in more pelts than any other point in the area.

Knight arrived at the Albany River in the late spring of 1693. He landed his men and approached the fort, which he apparently believed was abandoned. "Une furieuse décharge" of muzzle-loaders quickly disabused him. According to a Frenchman present he retreated "bien-tost" and hurriedly put his men into a semblance of military formation. For a few days, sniping continued back and forth between the British and what appeared to be a substantial contingent of Frenchmen. Two of Knight's men were killed and at least two wounded; their opponents suffered no casualties. On the morning of 23 June the French guns suddenly fell silent. Knight cautiously came up to the fort and forced his entry. There was no sign of anybody. Penetrating the blockhouse, he happened upon the fort's one remaining occupant—a demented French blacksmith in chains. Realizing they were hopelessly outnumbered, the others had stolen out of the fort the night before, heading south through the forest toward Quebec. They had been in fact only five and had given their beseigers the impression of being much more numerous by firing the guns of their dead comrades who had succumbed to scurvy and starvation as no ship had arrived the previous year. Of the five who slipped away, three died in the woods and two reached Montreal, where they told the story of the one prisoner taken by the English. During the winter he had lost his sanity and barbarously murdered the priest and the surgeon. The shackled armourer told his captors that they had just missed a sizable French party that had left the fort less than a month before their arrival because of lack of provisions.

If one demented Frenchman was a dubious reward for victory, Knight and his crew could indeed rejoice in the French furs they captured, the fruit of two years' trade. They siezed over 30,000 beaver skins as well as marten, otter and fox pelts.

Knight's recapture of Albany restored the post to the control of the Hudson's Bay Company, and it has remained so ever since. Indeed, the post appears to be the oldest business site in North America which a single company has continuously operated.

So in 1693 Albany's role as a tiny pawn in a gigantic power struggle ended; no more great events were to take place there. True, the French returned once more, in 1709, but they were driven off. And although the lethal squadrons of La Pérouse sacked the Company's main post in the Bay in 1782, Albany was left alone and settled down to a quiet life preoccupied by the routine of the fur trade. ◆

Ed. Note: Although Albany was the site of no more 'great events' its existence as the solitary English post on the Bay, from 1697 until 1714, gave it an importance far beyond its fur trade potentialities.

NORTHERN BOOKS

LETTERS FROM HUDSON BAY 1703-40

Edited by K. G. Davies, assisted by A. M. Johnson, with an introduction by Richard Glover. Hudson's Bay Record Society, London, 1965. Vol. XXV, 455 pages. Issued to members of the Society.

Reviewed by G. E. Thorman

This volume is a most useful publication for those readers who are interested in life at the Hudson Bay posts. There have been published two volumes of *Letters Outward* (XI and XX) which give a picture of the fur trade from the viewpoint of the proprietors in London. The present volume, the first of the *Letters Inward* to be published, gives a variegated picture of the fur trade and life at the posts from the viewpoint of the Governors and Chiefs at Albany, York, Churchill and Moose.

The annual letter from a Hudson Bay post served several purposes. It was a report on the year's activities at a particular post; it was an apologia for the conduct of the chief and an explanation of the mishaps for the year; it listed the changes of personnel, often with pithy comments on the character and personality of certain individuals; it was a promise to follow diligently the orders from London, but at the same time it suggested subtly or bluntly the idiocy of certain mandates sent by a Committee far removed from the pressures of survival in a hostile environment.

The letters have a charming variety in tone and style. The blunt impatient comments of chiefs who are sharply critical of the London Committee can be contrasted with the almost whining sycophancy of chiefs who are uncertain of the Committee's reactions to their conduct. But one point all the letters have in common: they are magnificent propaganda designed to prove that everything that went wrong, that every mishap and every error, was beyond the remedy of the superhuman energies and efforts of the writer.

As well as permitting an assessment of the character of the author, the letters give enlightening information on many aspects of the fur trade. The frequent references in the early letters to French fur traders intercepting the trade of the Bayside posts make the reader cognizant of how many independent and nameless traders from Montreal had preceded La Vérendrye. The system of indentured servants seems heartless. At the ages of 9 and about 5 respectively, John Hinson and Joseph Adams were indentured to serve until they were 24 years old. There is a pathetic quality about their appeals to London to ascertain how old they were. Yet, heartless as it seems to present day readers, the harsh life at Albany was probably preferable to life in an English orphanage. Joseph Adams rose to the position of Governor, a higher station than he could ever have attained in England.

The letters enumerate all the frustrations of weather and climate which affected both life and trade: the winds or floods which interfered with the goose hunts, the success of which was a chief factor in the healthy survival of both Indian and White; a fast break-up precipitated floods, a slow break-up prevented the upcountry Indians reaching the post; winters with too much or too little snowfall were both equally bad for hunting.

There is much material about the articles of trade: the size of kettles, the design of hatchets, the colours for broadcloth, the geegaws that were pleasing or displeasing to the Indians, the size of guns. Staunton's letter of 1725 includes his indent for trading goods, and the reader will wonder what useful or decorative purpose was served by "2 gross egg boxes".

Dr Richard Glover has written the introduction which begins with a summary of the seasonal variations and routine at the Bayside posts. He describes very effectively the importance of the middlemen who collected and brought down the furs of the Upland Indians. These are the men whom the factors designated as captains or lieutenants; they were the entrepreneurs of the Indian nations, and they possessed the same characteristics of vanity, the same liking for sharp practices as their white counterparts.

Dr Glover has gathered together all the meagre fragments of information in the Company records which relate to the 1709 attack on Albany, but despite his efforts there is simply not enough information available to recreate an accurate account of the attack.

The travels of Richard Norton are examined and assessed very thoroughly as is the founding of Churchill and the erection of its great stone fort by the same Norton whose brilliance and fortitude in the role of traveller was cancelled by his ineptitude as a business man and an architect.

The voyage of that redoubtable old man, James Knight, to Marble Island is discussed briefly and with some poignancy. The conduct of the Eastmain post and the second founding of Moose Factory are adequately covered.

In general, Dr Glover's introduction is a fair and comprehensive summary of the period. An acknowledged expert on Churchill and York, he draws rather heavily on the writings about those posts to create a picture of Bayside life. For example, the ice forming on the inside walls at York does not seem to have been a problem at Albany or Moose. Dr Glover is rather insistent that the Orkney breed of cattle were kept at Albany, but the journals of that post make specific reference only to sheep and goats. There seem to have been no cattle at Albany until the 1740's.

An obvious slip which should have been spotted in the proofreading locates Henley House at the junction of the Ogoki and Albany Rivers (p. xli) instead of the junction of the Albany flowing from the west and the Kenogami coming from the south.

An illuminating point made by Dr Glover in the last section of his introduction is the fact that the period covered by the letters was a period of uneasy but constant peace between England and France. The pressure of competition was not intense and the posts at the Bayside were like modern supermarkets who wait for their customers to come to them because there is no necessity to go out and drum up business.

Although Dr Glover's introduction gives a general picture of life at the posts and discusses the highlights of the period, it is the letters themselves which the reader will find most fascinating. By reading in sequence the letters for a particular post, the reader can understand the problems and difficulties peculiar to that post. He becomes acquainted with the character of the writer as well as absorbing the numerous snippets of information, often as frustrating in their incompleteness as they are revealing, about a vast range of topics: how to cheat the Company through private trade, how the Indians lived, anthropological data, botanical information and so on.

The volume is distinguished for its appendices, all of which are valuable collations of information. The Gover-

nors and Chiefs are listed for all the posts. The ships sailing between England and Hudson Bay are listed for the years 1697-1740 thus supplementing the list for 1687 to 1696 which was published in Volume XX. Out of 176 crossings between 1697-1740, either outward or inward, but six ships were lost—a remarkable tribute to the skill of the Company's captains. Other appendices list the value of cargoes sent to the Bay and the trade in furs for each post. Miss Johnson has prepared a list of eight thoroughly documented biographies which include James Knight, Henry Kelsey, Anthony Beale, and the nameless but indefatigable Slave Woman who accompanied William Stuart on his peace-making mission to the Northern Indians.

The footnotes are copious and informative, and every effort has been made to make them supplement as fully as possible the information given in the letters.

Mr Thorman, who is vice-principal and head of guidance at St Thomas Collegiate Institute, has done extensive research on the history of the lower Hudson Bay area, with particular emphasis on Albany where he has spent some seasons on the spot.

ESKIMO SCULPTURE

By George Swinton. McClelland & Stewart, Toronto, 1965. 224 pages, illus. $12.50

Reviewed by Tony Emery

When one considers that outside Canada the most celebrated Canadian artists of the last decade are Riopelle, Borduas and "the Eskimos", it is strange that we should have had to wait so long for a serious study of the art of the indigenous carvers of our remote northland. It is true that for a dozen years or so we have had the illustrated booklet *Canadian Eskimo Art*, put out by the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources with the assistance of James A. Houston. The photographs in this little book of some thirty carvings by the leading hunter-carvers "discovered" by Houston during trips made to the Arctic in the period 1948-50, and the small touring exhibits sponsored by the Department of Northern Affairs in the middle 1950s, served only to whet an appetite which the appearance of George Swinton's sumptuously-illustrated book goes a long way towards satisfying.

In his foreword Professor Swinton modestly disclaims any "pretensions to authorship or scholarship", but in fact he has read all that he could find on the subject, exiguous as that may be, and has travelled widely in the North to meet as many of the carvers as might easily be found. To a study of this kind Professor Swinton brings also some talents and resources that are rarely to be found among anthropologists or sociologists: he is himself a practising painter of some celebrity, and for many years he has thought deeply, written penetratingly, and lectured brilliantly on many aspects of art. Thus equipped, he has produced a book of the first importance, which should not be overlooked by anyone interested in art in Canada.

It was not an easy task. This much was already clear to those who read, in an article in *Canadian Art* in 1952, James Houston's estimate that at that time "over twenty thousand pieces [had] been brought out and sold by the Guild to the Canadian public". Since that time the number of pieces must have been multiplied by ten, and the number of carvers probably increased a hundredfold. To sheer numbers must also be added another difficulty, that of the paucity of available records, of which the author sadly observes that where they exist they "amount more to sources of confusion than of information".

The meagre documentary evidence, the confusion of the records, and the even more confusing stylistic volatility of some of the carvers led Mr Swinton to the regretful conclusion that a classification based on the *oeuvre* of individual artists was not at present possible. He adopted instead a comparative method "to indicate the scope and development of carving activities over the past fifteen years in relation to subject matter, individual form, and local characteristics". This method has drawbacks of its own—in particular it seems to encourage repetition, and to lead to rather abrupt dislocations in any attempt to develop a chronology—but it is easier to criticize than to suggest a workable alternative.

In turning away from the classification based on the artist it must not be thought that Mr Swinton has failed to do justice to these remarkable carvers, so many of the best of whom are actually anonymous. Wherever possible he groups the works of one outstanding sculptor together, and from his superb pictures with their incisive and sympathetic commentary there begin to emerge the artistic personalities of a score of master carvers, the majority of whom are new names since the publication of the Department booklet. In this way we become acquainted with Kavik (or Qavik) from Rankin Inlet, and with the Inukpuks, father and son, of Port Harrison, with the talented Paulusie of Sugluk, and the equally remarkable Ekoota of Baker Lake.

Mr Swinton has some interesting and suggestive observations to make about the regional flavour discernible in some of the work illustrated, while at the same time he rightly warns his readers against any rash attempt to over-simplify a sufficiently chaotic situation by trying to force all pieces of common provenance into capacious pigeon-holes labelled "Povungnituk" or "Baker Lake" or wherever. Where there are similarities in the general approach to form and content between artists who come from the same settlement the author has adduced some interesting information as to the personalities and tastes of the resident buyers, whose willingness to offer more money for certain kinds of carving than for others must clearly have exercised a shaping influence on the output of the carver.

The book is splendidly produced, with sixteen plates in full colour and more than two hundred illustrations in black and white. The author and publishers warmly acknowledge their gratitude to the Canada Council for financial assistance in publication, but they must themselves take the credit for the aesthetic success that makes the book one of the most satisfying to eye and hand that has yet come from a Canadian press.

Mr Swinton's book must be viewed rather as the first than as the last word on the subject, but all future students of this fascinating art will begin their studies heavily in his debt. It seems in the highest degree unlikely that anything approaching a definitive work could ever be written on the carvings of the Canadian Eskimo. If one should ever be produced it will certainly have to be built on the foundations provided by George Swinton. Until that work appears the obscure carvers of the north may rest assured that in Swinton they have found an interpreter and commentator whose insight and sympathy are combined with unusual perception, knowledge, and powers of persuasive exposition.

Art critic and historian, Tony Emery is associate professor in the department of fine arts at Victoria University.

CARIBOU ESKIMOS OF THE UPPER KAZAN RIVER, KEEWATIN

By Francis Harper. University of Kansas, 1964. 74 pages, illus. Obtainable from Arctic Institute of North America, Washington, D.C. 20009. Paperbound, $1.50 (U.S.)

Reviewed by Clarence Tillenius

The months spent in 1947 by Francis Harper with the Schweder household at their trading post on Nueltin Lake, Keewatin, enabled him to make a series of observations on the daily life, habits and equipment of the Eskimo individuals and families, the Kazan River Padleimiut, frequenting the upper Kazan River at that time.

Harper pays grateful tribute to the Schweders who, from their long and close association with the region's Eskimos, furnished him with a great deal of detail and information not otherwise to be obtained.

Supplementing and amplifying his own notes he draws on the published material and unpublished observations of many others, 35 authors being listed in the bibliography.

The picture drawn is not perhaps new to readers of *The Beaver*, but one that bears much re-emphasizing. A people pictured existing as best they can in an environment harsh in the extreme, a people usually cheerful, ready to help each other in difficulties, and still a people inured to harsh acceptance of the grimmer side of life: disease, suffering, starvation, and even cannibalism in a last resort when the specter of want stalks that desolate, frozen land.

The many intimate details noted by Mr Harper are interesting even where they reveal the gap that always lies between the mind and thinking of the Eskimo and those who strive to understand and to analyse him. But cropping up repeatedly in Mr Harper's thesis is the sombre, recurring note that seems to run through the writings of all thinking men who visit the Eskimo. The following examples must suffice:

"At the cultural level of the primitive, nomadic hunters, the caribou made subsistence there [on the Barren Grounds] not only feasible, but no doubt eminently satisfying for those who knew the necessary way of life. Now, after five or six millennia, the herds have waned to near-extinction, and with them have gone the hunters. The new order of civilization has come to the Barren Grounds, but it makes of the land a vast emptiness."

Another quote: "Bishop Marsh, who has served twenty-seven years in the Arctic, is a member of a committee that will advise the Federal Government (of Canada) on Eskimo affairs. He says the white man's gifts, including the baby bonus and the old age pension, rob the Eskimo of the spirit of independence that enabled him to survive amid the bleak wastes across the top of the continent."

Much has been written about the plight of the Eskimo: most people—the present reviewer included—have a tendency to forget that the Eskimo are a tough and resourceful race who have existed under conditions so harsh at times as to be almost beyond the grasp of people living in more hospitable parts of the world. Perhaps in our newly awakened and largely uninformed zeal to make reparations to the Eskimo for wrongs done him in the past, we shall end by destroying completely his self-reliance.

Let us hope not. Let us hope that we can regard the Eskimos not as wards, but as partners (to whom we can extend a neighbourly and helping hand when needed) in a world made more interesting by their continuing to exist as a unique and hardy people.

Mr Tillenius, who knows most of Canada at first hand, is well known as Canadian nature artist, author, and wilderness traveller.

KANAYU: The Young Hunter

By Margery Hinds. Basil Blackwell, Oxford (in Canada, Copp Clark), 1965. 89 pages. Illus. by Kathleen Gell. 11s.6d.

SONS OF THE ARCTIC

By Doug Wilkinson. Clarke, Irwin, Toronto, 1965. 179 pages. Illus. by Prudence Seward. $3.75

TIKTA'LIKTAK

By James Houston. Longmans, Don Mills, 1965. 63 pages. Illus. by the author. $3.50

Three Arctic books for young people,

Reviewed by Robert Williamson

Mention of Margery Hinds still brings ready reaction among people who have a few years in the north and who have known this dedicated and original personality—an earnest educator, an intense and quiet-spoken little Englishwoman, who was best at working alone. In many Arctic years. Miss Hinds learnt something about the Eskimo people, and now her writing, mainly for young people, is a valuable contribution to the needed understanding of the northern life.

Kanayu is a story, told with excellent economy—of most of a year in the life of a small Eskimo boy. It is obvious that her time at Arctic Bay influenced the author most in the writing of this tale. There are accounts of seal-hunting and camping around break-up time, summer boating, the customs of food-sharing, annual ship-time, whale-hunting, dog-team travel and snow-house camping in winter, of drifting on an ice-pan, and of family life. The story line follows the boy through this variety of adventures and in the process covers life in all seasons, with good authentic detail but no verbal clutter and laboured description. The observation is obviously that of someone with genuine experience in the Arctic. It is clear that Miss Hinds did not spend absolutely all her teaching career in a cosy school-room teaching the children to despise the Eskimo way of life (as do most of her quickly-transient present-day successors) but put in some time out among the people. Some of the writing, especially the dialogue, is stilted, and occasionally has Eskimo people apparently demonstrating quite unlikely patterns of white-man's thought, such as reference to time and temperature using white-men's measures, concern with food going cold, and the "sameness" of a stretch of "scenery".

For those of us who are tired of the vapid "writers" with little or no acquaintance with the north, and their tendency to reject anything but the most traditionalistic of Eskimo life, Miss Hinds' little story reflects refreshingly the contemporary situation in a small Arctic settlement. She readily and accurately offends the romantic purist with references to the growing practice of taking a small transistor radio receiver on the hunt, and with the vital introduction of such things as an icebreaker, X-ray equipment and an aeroplane into the narrative. In fact Miss Hinds uses the dreadful modern reality of disease in the Arctic, lack of medical facilities, exile treatment and family separation as important factors in her plot. She even manages, with great delicacy, to implant a few barbs about the northern education system, which delays its own progress with its intransigent devaluation of the Eskimo culture and blind propagation of southern urban values.

The illustrations by Kathleen Gell are remarkably accurate and well executed. Altogether this is an authentic and honest effort, well worth the little time it would take anyone, young or old, to read it.

The account of the foot journey of three Eskimo boys through difficult country in North Baffin Island during freeze-up time—when they encountered dangers from blizzard, hunger, white-out, accident and a marauding polar bear—is one which could be told by almost anyone and still win interest. When recounted by as well-known a personality as Doug Wilkinson, it is a story that should have a special power to grip the young reader. Mr Wilkinson spent about a year in that part of the country, and got as much out of that experience as he was capable. Thus *Sons of the Arctic* is improved by trueness to life which comes from the author's acquaintance with that area and the life of the people. There is no lack of detail, and the three principal characters emerge with identifiable personalities.

It is his concern with detail, however, which in places in this book impairs and loosens the grip of the narrative. If somehow the space thus given could have been devoted more to interesting information concerning the Eskimo culture rather than to such inconsequential details as a step-by-step account of the lighting of a primus stove, the book could have been even further enriched. A great deal of the book is taken up with dialogue, which sometimes impedes the progress of the tale without adding much. More troublesome—the dialogue is also far too often stilted and un-Eskimo. One is surprised to find one as knowledgeable as this author writing dialogue in which the Eskimo relatives address each other directly by name (which is never done—they always use the appropriate kin-terms), and use such improbable phrases as "many, many *miles*", "an *hour* or so", "a few *inches* more", "about *fifty feet*" and "expecting every *second* to be your last". One other phrase which sticks in the mind has the ring of an Arctic Tarzan. The father of the boys says, during a ponderous speech of admonition: "Nanook, the bear, is king in this land." Ug!

None of this is to say that this book is not worth reading. The author is a film-maker, and he may be expected to think visually and theatrically, and thus use dialogue, not to fairly reflect Eskimo speech, but to enliven and heighten the effect of his story. The fact remains that it is a good story, and even counting these irritations (which may not even emerge in the minds of non-Eskimo-speaking readers) it is enthralling and sufficiently well-told to inform and inspire readers of any age. This book demonstrates with authenticity and enthusiasm the power of even young Eskimos to confront the considerable dangers, hardships and vicissitudes of their harsh country with dignity, ingenuity and courage.

Jim Houston has produced a little gem. In simple, evocative language, powerfully backed by his dynamic drawings, he has retold in *Tikta'liktak* an old Uqumiut folk-tale with vividness and even with moments which approach the poetic. Listen—from the first page:

"Tiktaliktak's people were sea hunters, singers, carvers, builders of sleek kayaks, masters of swift dog teams, whale hunters, listeners at the breathing places in the ice."

This is a tale of a type very common in both the factual and fanciful legendry of the Eskimo—of the experiences of someone who was drifted away from the landfast ice on a broken pan when hunting at the floe-edge. In this case the hero, a young hunter (whose name is the word for butterfly, in Eskimo a lovely and expressive word) is marooned for months on an isolated island. He gives himself up for dead, and makes his own grave, but lives on, even defeating a polar bear in combat, and with great ingenuity and daring brings himself after break-up back to the mainland and the relatives who had despaired of his life.

Eskimo folklore is full of tales, well worth retelling, first of all to the young Eskimos themselves, many of whom in this generation have been taught by various types of white people that their old tales either are silly or sin. But it is good too that the rest of the world also share this rich contribution to our total Canadian cultural mosaic—from one group of people who can quite genuinely be called a "founding race". Houston took a strong interest in the Eskimo folklore during his time in the Arctic and, as an artist who did much to bring about the present appreciation of Eskimo art, was well-advised to learn of the folkloric influences. With this background and his facile charcoal pencil in his skilled left hand, Houston is well-suited to the task of telling the wider young public of the cultural riches we have in the Arctic. Not only are his vigorous drawings endowed with atmosphere and excitement, but his writing too is clean-cut, rhythmic and effective.

Mr Williamson is an anthropologist who resides at Rankin Inlet, NWT.

Soapstone carving by Johnny Inukpuk of Port Harrison, c.24" high, 1961.

THE DANGEROUS RIVER

By R. M. Patterson. Gray's Publishing Ltd., Sidney, B.C. 1966. 272 pages, illus. $7.50

The valley of the South Nahanni, that fabled river of the Northwest Territories, continues to intrigue both reader and traveller but those who penetrate the river's canyons are comparatively few and those who have actually lived in the valley are very few indeed. It is good therefore that this excellent book by one who knows should be republished. The book has long been out of print and it is now put out in Canada for the first time.

Mr Patterson writes—in smooth easy style—of his first visit, alone, to the Nahanni for four months in 1927, and of the year (1928-9) he and a friend spent in the valley prospecting, part of the winter in a cabin in Deadmen's Valley. Though Mr Patterson has returned more than once to the valley since then he decided not to try to revise the book, in which he is wise, leaving its original freshness unimpaired.

The first edition of Dangerous River was reviewed in *The Beaver* for June 1954 by P. G. Downes who wrote, in part: "The physical battle itself [with the dangerous river] is told with such detail that this reader for one breathed a sigh of relief that Mr Patterson ever got out alive. . . . In resumé, this is an exciting, virile, technically absorbing account of a skilful and courageous feat of northern travel, unique in locale with a valuable setting-right of a previously tortured record." No more need be said.—*M.B.*

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